



DION O'DONNOL

Collected Poems

BOOKS, THE NUMBERED SEQUENCE, AND LATER POEMS

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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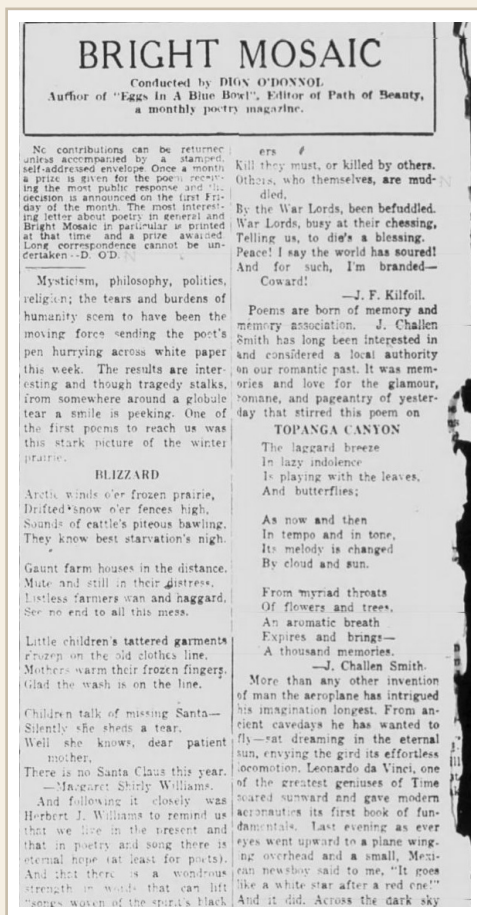
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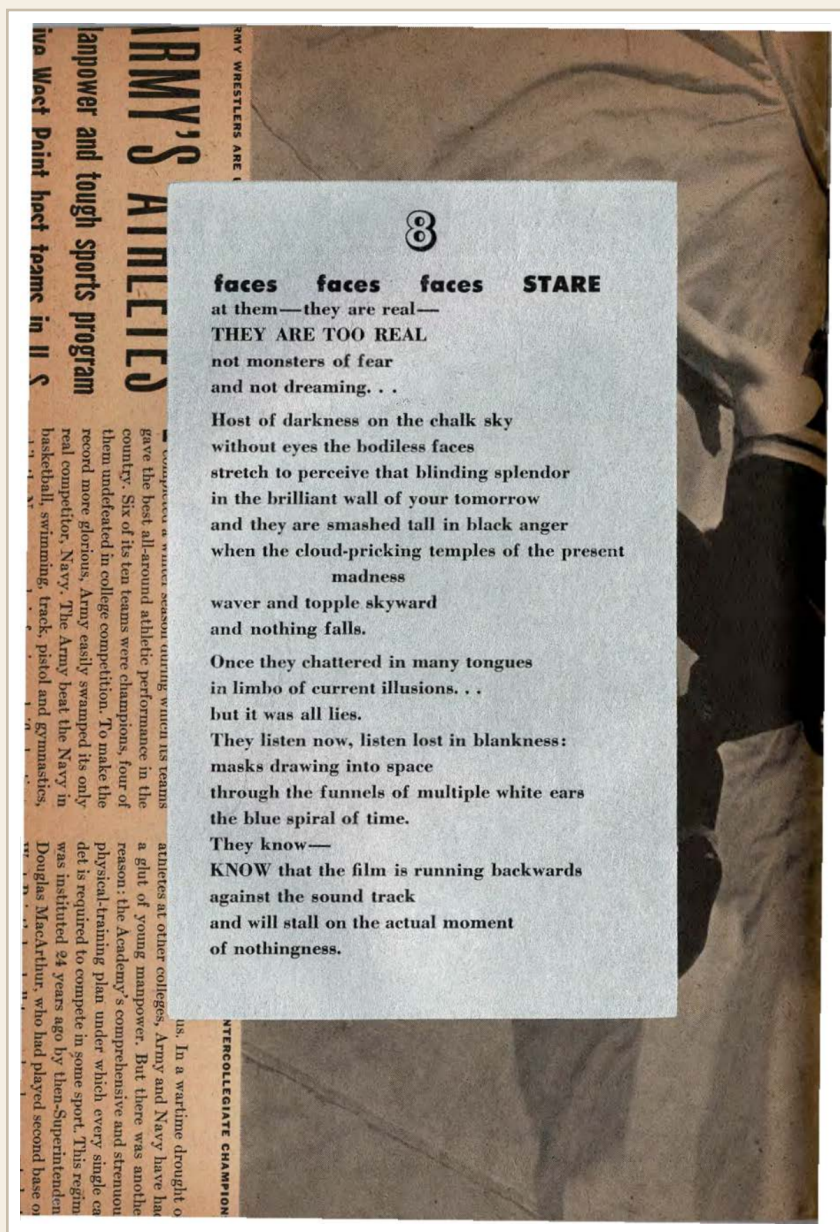
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ARCHIVAL IMAGES AND ORIGINAL BOOKWORK

Newspaper editorship, typographic experiment, and the later haiku record



The opening of O'Donnol's first located "Bright Mosaic" column, West Los Angeles Independent, January 14, 1938. The column ran under his editorial credit through December 1942.



A poem overprinted on a commercial-magazine leaf in the silver-state copy of Listen, No Echo, 1949. This material construction is preserved in the companion facsimile but not reproduced as a poem in this reading edition.

**The morning-glory
Has climbed the center picket
Of the garden gate.**

—*Dion O'Donnol*

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O'Donnol's morning-glory haiku in Dion, no. 1, 1963.

INTRODUCTION

Poet, printer, editor, translator, and Los Angeles book artist

Names and beginnings

Dion O'Donnol was born Arthur Francis Faulconer in Adrian, Washington, to Alfred Marion Faulconer and Lenora Beal. The Irish name and persona were inventions. He was advertised in Los Angeles as an Irish poet and lecturer, while legal, copyright, and military records continued to identify him as Faulconer. His first book was copyrighted as Arthur Adrian Faulconer, borrowing a middle name from his birthplace. The pseudonym eventually became so complete that a printers' reference work listed Dion O'Donnol and Arthur F. Faulconer as two proprietors of the same press.

Los Angeles poetry and Wagon & Star

He appeared in Los Angeles literary life in the middle 1930s. Newspapers called him an exponent of free verse; he directed the KFVD Radio Poets' Club, had poems broadcast over KMPC, published in Southern California and Oakland newspapers, lectured, judged contests, and led workshops. His first collection, *Eggs in a Blue Bowl*, appeared in 1937 from Wagon & Star, the press he founded and operated. The name came from a friend's joke that his plans for publishing poetry sounded like hitching a wagon to a star. Wallace Cook designed the pressmark of bees, wagon, and stars; O'Donnol also used a personal emblem derived from the Indian story of a blue bee imprisoned in a lotus.

The wartime press

Wagon & Star operated first in Los Angeles, then from 1823 Sawtelle Boulevard in West Los Angeles, and later from Inglewood. O'Donnol designed, handset, printed, and promoted books there, often with the Los Angeles printer Harvey Parker and Craftsmen. By 1938 he was associated with the poetry newspaper Path of Beauty. On January 14 of that year he began conducting "Bright Mosaic" in the West Los Angeles Independent, introducing and arranging poems by a broad regional network. The 102 located installments under his editorial credit continue through December 18, 1942. From April 1943 through October 1945 the column continued under Georgia Nicholson or Nicholas, identified as editor during O'Donnol's absence. His surviving lectures range from Irish verse and current affairs to "The Writer's Place in National Defense." An editorial announced for his projected magazine Destinies argued that a chaotic world required spirituality, faith, conviction, and devotion to an ideal.

Marriage and the 1949 bookwork

The press's most active year was 1942. It issued O'Donnol's *Bright Singing Hour* and *Many a Fragile Thing*, the pseudonymous *Blades of Breath*, Odell Francis's *Smoking Flax*, and *Chorus for America: Six Philippine Poets*, edited by Carlos Bulosan with an introduction by O'Donnol. *Chorus for America* brought together Jose Garcia Villa, R. Zulueta da Costa, and other Filipino poets during the first year of American participation in the Second World War. A copy of Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart* later inscribed to O'Donnol remembers the 'frantic days in 1942, when the war came to stop our work.'

Sonnets, translation, and haiku

O'Donnol also created a wider network for small-press poetry. Destiny Editions, announced for 1944, comprised twelve contemporary chapbooks by Clifford Gessler, David Cornel DeJong, Lucille Evans, M. M. Pettengill, Byron Herbert Reece, Mina Shafer, Everett Gillis, Donald Sutcliffe, Joanne de Longchamps, Manfred Carter, Carolyn Naught Saxton, and Victorino Mapa. Wagon & Star printed or published books by Ruth Forbes Sherry, Emma Putnam Bancroft, Charles H. Howe, Dexter Allen, Bernice Ames, Joyce Odam, and others. O'Donnol's second imprint, Unicorn, is documented through a cataloguer's note to Howe's *Black Panther Search*.

Later years and legacy

In January 1946 O'Donnol married Shirley Miles in Berkeley. A divorce petition followed in Dayton, Ohio, in July 1947, although the surviving evidence does not establish when or whether a final decree was entered. Their son Miles was born in 1947. Shirley retained the O'Donnol name and later became a theatrical-costume scholar. Family records suggest that father and son had little or no continuing relationship.

Listen, No Echo, published in 1949, is O'Donnol's central achievement as both poet and printer. Its colophon claims one thousand copies, the first hundred numbered and signed, and credits master printer Clinton H. Martin, linotyper C. E. Franklin, Harvey Parker, and pressmen L. H. Embrey and M. E. Raynes. The book combines fragmented and often nihilistic poems with pages on black and red stock, typographic constructions, antique ornaments, and sheets torn from Life magazine and overprinted with verse. Because the advertisements differ, copies exist in variant states. The surviving silver and orange copies in this archive demonstrate that the book was not merely illustrated: mass-media print became part of each poem's material field.

In a 1949 Oklahoma interview O'Donnol named Gertrude Stein as one of the greatest influences of modern times. *Listen, No Echo* bears that influence in its fractured syntax, repetition, discontinuity, and refusal of conventional lyric closure. Its collision of poetry with advertising anticipates later Pop and concrete practices without belonging neatly to either. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* followed in 1950, returning to a more conventional form while preserving O'Donnol's interests in spirituality, desire, and cosmic imagery.

His work did not end there. *Banquets of Hunger*, his selection of early poems by Arthur Rimbaud in English translation, appeared in 1962 as a string-tied student production set and printed at Lennox High School under the supervision of Eugene Earll. In 1963 O'Donnol edited the first and only located issue of *Dion*, illustrated by Florance Unkeless and containing 'Genesis of Love,' a morning-glory haiku, and the two-page cowboy monologue 'Sweet Rose of Cimarron.' The same year he was associated with the design of *The Uplift of Lucifer*, a collection of L. Frank Baum ephemera.

O'Donnol remained a practicing haiku poet into old age. His typographically compressed version of Basho's old-pond poem circulated as a teaching sheet and was included in Hiroaki Sato's *One Hundred Frogs* in 1983. The review record now corrects the earlier assumption that his publishing stopped in the 1960s: *daily walk*: a haiku year appeared from Wagon & Star in Long Beach in 1998, a 110-page spiral-bound calendar praised in *Frogpond* as the work of a long-time practitioner; *Day Breaks: A Haiku Year 2000 Calendar* Haiku Book followed in 2000 and is recorded in the Millikin University Haiku Library.

O'Donnol's later decades remain less fully documented than his years in West Los Angeles. A national competition awarded a Dion O'Donnol prize in 1973, and Wagon & Star publications can be traced from the 1930s through at least 2000. Correspondence in the Judson Crews papers at the Harry Ransom Center and a dedicated O'Donnol series in the Poets Garden records at the University of Southern California offer the clearest routes toward a fuller account. On February 2, 2007, aged ninety-four, O'Donnol drowned in the Pacific Ocean off Los Angeles; the county medical examiner recorded the death as accidental.

EDITORIAL NOTE AND SOURCES

Scope, transcription policy, the numbered sequence, and companion facsimile

This is a reset reading edition, not a facsimile. The five conventional poetry books are presented chronologically, with their printed order retained. Page-derived wraps, display capitals, ornaments, and incidental spatial effects are not imitated; stanza divisions and intentional indentation are retained where the scans establish them. Each poem begins on a new series page and carries a source statement after the text.

Listen, No Echo receives a deliberately narrower treatment. This edition resets the complete numbered sequence, 1–54. It passes over the independent experimental visual poems and typographic constructions, including overprints on leaves removed from commercial magazines. Those works depend on their material fields and remain available in the separately preserved *Collected Poems: Facsimile Edition*. The distinction prevents a reset page from pretending to reproduce a visual poem whose meaning lies in paper, advertisement, color, and type placement.

Fresh page-level recognition was produced from the local scans and used as a finding aid. Decorative initials, unusual type, damaged letters, and narrow columns were checked against the images; clear recognition errors and source-page furniture were removed. The early books remain typographically difficult witnesses, and the saved page transcriptions make future correction possible. No copy was available for *Banquets of Hunger*, *daily walk*, or *Day Breaks*, so those books are documented in the introduction and sources but cannot be silently reconstructed.

Chronology

1912 Born Arthur Francis Faulconer in Adrian, Washington.

- mid-1930s Active in Los Angeles poetry broadcasts, clubs, newspapers, lectures, and workshops.
- 1937 Publishes *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* and establishes Wagon & Star.
- 1938-42 Edits Path of Beauty and conducts the West Los Angeles Independent poetry column "Bright Mosaic."
- 1942 Publishes three books of his own and helps issue *Chorus for America* and other Wagon & Star titles.
- 1944 Edits the twelve-book Destiny Editions series.
- 1946-47 Marries Shirley Miles; their son Miles is born; a divorce petition follows.
- 1949 Publishes the materially experimental *Listen, No Echo*.
- 1950 Publishes *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets*.
- 1962-63 Publishes Rimbaud translations, edits Dion Number One, and designs or assists later private-press books.
- 1983 Appears as a Basho translator in Hiroaki Sato's *One Hundred Frogs*.
- 1998-2000 Publishes the haiku calendars *daily walk* and *Day Breaks*.
- 2007 Dies by accidental drowning in the Pacific Ocean off Los Angeles.

Principal sources

1. O'Donnol, Dion. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl*. Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937.
2. O'Donnol, Dion. *Bright Singing Hour*, *Blades of Breath*, and *Many a Fragile Thing*. West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942.
3. O'Donnol, Dion. *Listen, No Echo*. West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949.
4. O'Donnol, Dion. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets*. 1950.
5. O'Donnol, Dion. *Banquets of Hunger*: Some Early Poems of Arthur Rimbaud in English Translation. Los Angeles, 1962.
6. Dion, Number One. Inglewood: Wagon & Star Publishers, 1963.
7. Sato, Hiroaki, ed. *One Hundred Frogs*: From Renga to Haiku to English. New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1983.
8. Frogpond 22, no. 1 (1999): review of *daily walk*: a haiku year.
9. Millikin University Haiku Library catalogue: *Day Breaks*, 2000.
10. University of Florida, Wagon and Star Press printers' device record.
11. Poets Garden records, Series 17, University of Southern California Special Collections.
12. Judson Crews papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

13. Local birth, marriage, draft, newspaper, family, and Los Angeles County medical-examiner research files.

EGGS IN A BLUE BOWL

The first Wagon & Star collection, 1937

Prelude

A clearer vision in the wreck of dreams,
In the weariness of memories and tears
Such songs as Joy has never wrought!
I make poems for the pitied evils,
For both sorrow and disgust . . .
I seek and find the definite knowledge of
My good. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 10.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Let There Be Song

How long has space gathered this blueness
That night jewels with white stars,
Makes intense?

How long has this sky leaned to the mountain,
The horizon of sea and plain?
How long has this desire ached
With silence?

For the speechless sky,
LET THERE BE SONG!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 11.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Song of Beginning

At this moth hour;
In this deep moon of remembering
I feel you near to me
Lonely brothers: Twin guardians of my peace.

You with the blue plucked flower,
the flower that lives without root—
You yourself are blue . . . dark blue . . . deep blue . . .
BLUE—blue as the shadow-dreaming night.
 . . . sing not too sad a song,
 wash not with tears the solitudes
 while you sit brooding over long.

And you other one, fair as ever-dawning day,
You whose heart is a red lion like the sun,
I hear your soft, sudden singing
As you run . . . Why do you run away?
What lures you ever beyond the confining rim of dark?
O I would have even the white spark
That lights the frail flames behind your eyes
And sends thought leaping on its endless flight.

O my twin brothers—keep me!
Keep me in joy, the joy of laughter . . . tears . . .
For in joy was I born . . . for Death . . . for Life.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 12.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Crossing Pershing Square in the Rain

There is a wet-magic
On this park tonight
With none here to see.
No one walks upon the paths
Of gold and ebony
But me.

Soft rain is making tick-tock laughter
In the broad banana leaves. . .
Wet penciling blurs
The sharp and youthful
Outline of the fountain
Into a querulous old lady
Waiting for her coffin.

Skyward the darkness closer gathers
In the graceful, patient arms
Of waiting trees . . .
It really doesn't matter
That not one walks
With me.

Storm casts a spell of beauty
No other is here to see,
None walk upon these wet paths
Made of gold and ebony. . .
No one knows this magic
Save only me!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 13.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

All Blue Is Precious

Because it was blue he saved it carefully—
A little stone, a piece of string, a bit of sky,
A sheet of paper (ragged, torn and soiled by words
words long out-worn by use)
Because they were blue—even the least of them he saved:
some grey-blue clay (to make into a vase)
a tiny bottle, once used for ink,
a lovely bead . . . a book in an unknown tongue (so
eloquent in turquoise covers)
a pair of eyes. . . a view of the sea. . .
another bit of sky . . . shadows of night. . .
a sailor's blues . . . a tall, swampflower.
A dream—any blue thing!

He saves all things blue—
they shout with one voice to him
“Love.” “Love.” “Love.”

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 14.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Days

My days are like a string of empty pearls
False, hollow, round, symmetrical,
Heavy with tears—
Deep in an unreasoned consciousness;
Of value
Because Time is counted precious
Somewhere.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 14.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

City Rain

Frantically
the long palm fronds
 wave across the wind—
The grey sky slips
quietly away,
dissolving slowly;
 Dropping a misty,
 silver charm of saltless tears
 upon the city's drab enchantment
 crowded down a hill.

O heart, be choked—
 Be still!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 15.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Blue Glory Trumpets

They are the blunted morning's only hope,
Blue trumpets of his despairing tears,
defiant laughter . . .
Morning-glories—triumphant
over a grey unpainted wall,
under a grey dull-aching sky—
They yield not;
They give no quarter
before the ineffectual sword of his mind—
His much-vaunted intellect—
They make his their challenging desire,
His their blue-throated cry
which leaps to startle that beyond
any grey world-edge
or depth of blue sky!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 15.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Magnolia Blooming

still pale lovely
Heavy on the sweet dark
so that I go on tip-toe—

the May magnolia
blooms. . .

Pale, lovely
 like a soft moth
on the dark sheen of bright leaves
wraith-like as the day moon
 and my love!

Which will destroy it
 —eager fingers bringing
the withering brown stain
that comes to all things lovely—?

 —far-wishing that forever
leaves alone,
the half burnt out
Dead, and lovely moon—?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 16.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Autumn with Magnolias

Blood red . . . tears of the magnolias fall in this still,
gold-wine weather that heralds Autumn . . . so recently
above these same grey pavements, among green-varnished
leaves, the white dream of loveliest bloom perfumed a
warmer and a softer air . . . the cold, the brittle bite of zow
turns leaves velvet brown, mottled chartreuse and a paler
yellow than the Winter's sun . . . where was purest loveli-
'ness, a soft, doe-brown pod hangs ready to weep red seeds
into the still-pressing air . . . undisturbed, this day, by
merest falling leaf or tear.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 17.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Flower in Blue

By the wayside growing . . .
blooming amidst the casual grass
a spirit flower . . . cool . . . faint . . .
Pale as the blue remembered hands
of some half-forgotten priest of Druid-land . . .
Or the blue-purple eyes, in the pale face
of that ancient dark princess of Ireland,
turned to remembering of the fearless Viking,
Eric, with the flame for hair and beard . . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 17.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

To One Departing for the Orient

My dreams go with you
making white sails
on the unmanned winds
over all the old, wide cradle
of the Great Mother
called Pacific—
My dreams flee with you
from the sea-shore worlds,
from the sun's hot joy. . .
I am beyond being Pape with a dream. . .
I cannot find worship if silence
while my dreams wing seaward from my world
making white sails for unmanned winds
whining their barren impotent hatred
of the black plumed passings
of steamers like yours.

My dreams are white wings
on the disgruntled winds' remembering
of the dead, ghost sailings of yesterday!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 18.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Morning

Something ethereal and brief . . .
Something surely akin to grief . . .
Full lovely—this Eucalyptus tree a-borning,
In the magic of this misty morning.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 19.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Question without Resolve

She writes:

I feel your problem. However,
It is not one of geography—
And I know she is right.
What unknowable thing
Urges me to my own quest?
Why must I move with this strange uncertainty?
Why this necessity to travel the blue distances?
Do I seek only the unseekable—the empty horizon?

I know my problems, for I carry them with me
Everywhere.

Then: Why this futility, this ever moving on?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 19.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Palms

She said: I love you
For you are tall . . . slender . . . graceful,
With the masculine grace of a palm tree.
All palms are warriors. . .
Warriors, with green-plumed helmets of burnished gold.
Every palm on this avenue has been my lover.
You are proud also.
Proud:
Like a palm with its head against the sky!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 20.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Palms II

There are obsequious palms bowing to you
Graceful, suave, in every whim of wind. . .
And palms seeing your pity,
Insatiate as the thirsting sun. . .
Also proud palms eager to leave their appointed place
And do battle beyond the blue sky's way.

But outside your window, quiet with more ancient wisdom,
These two leaning close,
Intimate and whispering.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 21.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Palms III

Dreary, desolate and forlornly
These begger palms stand ragged
To the wind.
Their feet in oil—
Their faces to the sea—
Asking but to be gone
They make their plea
To a far horizon washed in sea.
Young and old, as land-sick sea-men stand,
They stand—
Dreaming away from towering, black skeletons
And land.
Always going—never gone
They are a long irregular row
Of dwarfed, deformed and stunted beggars,
Wind-worried and worn by their evident desire.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 21.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Hills of Late Summer

I would run my hands along the horizon rhythms of yellow
hills.

I would rub the palms of my hands down the yellows,
As a lover caressing the soft, secret places of his loved ones
body.

O, I can lay my hands on the yellow hills—
And caress them softly.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 22.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

The Road

Why did we sit and wait,
Why did we watch the road
When tired of counting stars
In the dusk?

We knew no one would come,
So why did we watch the road,
Waiting. . . listening. . .
In the dusk?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 22.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Cigarette

Burning a cigarette away,
Burning it away in lovely forms,
Living sur-realism—
Changed by a word on the lips.

What are these forms?
Who makes them from our breath?
Why is the deep-shadow saffron brown—
The smoke blue to white?

Lovely and too unreal,
Like the deaths that make a life—
This cigarette burning,
Away, endlessly,
In thought snatching forms
Of loveliness.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 23.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Of Evil

And the mountain has its rhythm,
Its motion in the universe.
The dead lie, unmoving, until forgotten,
 crumpled dust.
But Evil finds, sucks a soul of being
From the gentle breath drawn in wonder
Where the sun is dying
For the splendor of the night.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 23.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Only Wish

I like blue best.
 You know why?
Look UP!
The sky is blue.
I want nothing—
 Nothing but blue
over me.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 24.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

The Silver Lizard

I have a silver lizard
 with little emerald eyes,
Star-created by a wizard
 who can never die,
For here still casting spells
 upon my desk he lies.

On my desk he weights the papers
 stares with pained surprise,
At the grotesque, black capers
 of words a-sailing by;
Sees my lovely, fleeing visions,
 escape white-paper prison;
Mocks my momentous decisions,
 my hopes so brightly risen
Like a Phoenix from white ash.

And he never stirs, but by my hand,
 though he is so very much alive.
O my shining, silver lizard
 with the little emerald eyes!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 25.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

The Poet on Seeing the First of His Little Songs in the Immortalizing Type—

How cold you are,
How bare, how blue, how trembling,
O little song, once so warm and comforting,
What have I done?
Was it not cruel of me to cast you naked
Before the vulgar gaze of strangers?
My heart knows no blame for you,
I understand your turning away from me
For you are no longer mine.
But come, warm your cold, repulsing hands,
Your coldly retreating feet at the fire of this thought;
You are not nearly so cold as my little lost songs,
Someone may take you to their heart for warmth and
forgetting,
But, those little lost songs are like the baby born but not
breathing,
Frozen, they cling to the atolls of forgetting,
Beyond the last tear-wave of the sea of remembering!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 26.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

I Would Be Strong

I love strong things; I would be strong.
Before you condemn me to a wrong,
Know, I want not the dust of strength
That lives in mortal brawn.
Nor yet that of familiar things,
Wood or stone or iron or steel.

My strength it must be real!
I ask the strength that lives
In the patience that a mountain gives.
I would be strong as moon-guided tides—
Sure drawn from silent depths—
And strong, strong as silence is.

O I would be strong as Life's rebirthing urge,
Or better still, strong as Beauty's luring snare.
Beauty, with her dark dream-entangled hair
That lifts songs, woven of the spirit's black despair,
On fragile, splendid wings—and yet, so strong,
To lift the wilted heart in wondrous song!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 27.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Rebuked

I said that it was very easy, that I could
Write a lively song that might be good,
And Beauty mocked me—as she should—
Knowing how small, how great a thing
The trembling, naked urge to sing!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 28.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Rain

Luminous rain. . .
Murmuring across the roof,
Like a wizard's muffled drum,
Enchanting all my youth,
Until I wish to run
Down the lane.

Gentle rain. . .
Casting spells upon the trees
While veiling them in silvery mist.
Indeed, yours is strange witchery '
In vain do I resist
Your silver flame.

Melodious rain. . .
Singing your hushed lullaby,
Like an ageless, old magician,
I wonder, should you be denied,
When you urge me more than listen
To your claim?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 28.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Old Diary

Strange figurements—
These shadows that pass—
of alive . . . dead . . .
On these pages withered grass
of vanished memory. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 29.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Gifts

They were little things:
A dropped petal of magnolia bloom
velvet brown;
A varnished leaf
chartreuse green;
A kind word
like the full, white magnolia dream
hanging from a green branch
down. . .
A round, small water-worn stone;
A smaller flower-star;
A philosophic thought
clean and stark
as a new, white bone—

They are the blood of his life,
These, his gifts, singing
like poems. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 29.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Blue Gods for Jon

..We sisters are, no longing sets one free.n shaded blue waters
ever changing whiteness

 caught
O sea child of the soft white shadows,
 forgotten of Aphrodite and Eros,
all gods are bitter

May changing years never
 bring the too sharp fragment . . .
Never distort
the unborn last year
 as shadow nets

of blue water
Child of white shadows,
 know all fragments sharp,
all gods bitter . . .

even the blue gods of water blur
sharp loveliness.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 30.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Answer to Ossian and All Heroes Whether of Ireland or the World

If the battle be enough,
Why have a standard to be lost?
Why Death resist,
If there be honor in another's sword at thrust?
What manner of equality is there in conflict
That strives to win, and comes to dust?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 31.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

Touch

Friend, I have sipped your cup of silence:
The taste is acrid—bitter on my tongue.
But as I go down the pathways of the world,
With no house to shelter me that is not an inn,
I shall listen in every doorway...
Listen, hoping to hear of you again.

For one day we found touch.
Something in each of us kindled on the blood of the other.
Each of us became part of the other forever.
Now, in each rise and fall of the dark blood
That outlines our separate selves as individualities,
There is some part of each, alive from the other.

And I—I am happy it is so!
... and though I listen in vain
In all those doorways, on all those pathways...
Through the world, golden candles of memory
Will light and scent my way...
There will always be this song singing in my heart.

I know this is so: For one day we found touch!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 31.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

Depths of Light and Dark

Deep flow of light and dark—
World tides meet in me,
I am one of those in whose being
the light has long shadows fall.

It is good to have both light and dark—
The day and the night in one's body.
And who can say the black-crystal
Is of less worth than the other?
You who scoff, rattling life-seeds in the pod,
With the echoing laugh of idiocy escaping—
Escaping from the vacuum of never-being,
You have no affinity with the dark and its feeling,
You have no knowledge of the night of being.
You guess at the sorrows the night-being brings me.
Tabulating in a science and nomenclature
The not-understandable to you—
But, you never, cannot, dream its joys:
I feel the good of both light and dark—
The night and the day dwelling in the body;
The fountain-head and the mouth; the flood
And the ebb; the beginning and the result
Meeting, working, flowing, becoming,
Fusing into being—
For I know that dark is the root of evolving light;
That light evolved germ-life and its fecundity
That grew on until it found love. And that
All these flow to source forever—to the dark.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 32–33.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Blue Pearls

Buddha wept
and pearls were tears.
Blue, black or grey.
Purple, yellow, pink
or white . . .

They are all shadow-thoughts
and rarest among the rare
these blue tears
that know no memory
though they haunt the travail
of the soul
as a soft, low horizon-cloud
troubles the great sea
with dreams of land.

They have no compare—
For it is a hushed heart
cultures them.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 33.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Address in Passing

Always this part of me which knows no doubt,
Shrinks from the mockery of the world that does not know.
Rewards and splendors not for me are heaped
Against the closed door of my heart,
Which remembers moments forgotten for the dream
That you alone can wake in me.

For you alone, Death, I drink blue night
And eat stars that languid streams of sunlight
Never find—

For you are the only other one
Who knows to remember the small twilight,
Haunted of old loves. . .

Like ghosts, these animated shadows lost
beyond hope on the storm end
of dripping days.

Why must I flee through endless doors
and crouch with you in that last corner
whose dark holds no thought?

Why do I shut all doors quietly and finally?

Will no one ever know that they touch not the
Nor even you who hide me?
Will no one ever understand that which I sob out?
That which is beyond fear of dark held in rooms?
Must I always be a lonely little boy sobbing night?
Is that why there are so many proud, weary faces
Making hope at world windows?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 34.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Dark Dream This Beauty

Dark dream this beauty which the mind
can never put its arms around—
Singing, throbbing, ache of longing
made of sad and torn violin sound.

Even memory could not bring about
its bewildered, age-long hunger for surcease,
For all things forgotten speed its flight
though it be blind with pain, with doubt.

Being no part of night or day;
Being forsaken both of mind and heart,
This ghost-dream undying finds no resting place
Nor lethe for this unending flight.

This dark dream will never know
Time nor place; race nor home!

O dark dream of beauty you are my lover.
To you I give because I am ready to receive—
Even though you have made my heart to break
In every remembered birth
Since first you called to me.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 35.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

With the Heart's Friend

All departure is a sister unto Death
and the fond goodbye is empty
of any future hope.

Why then clasp the hand in futile grasp
or bind with dead memory he who travels
the swift-arc away?

Even the dead know mute-voiced return
out of the passage into yesteryear . . .
Useless to turn eyes to waiting
here or there. . .

Both Life and Death intrigue the helpless mind
by being at once curious and interesting.

Because it would cut the two apart
I find a farewell always meaningless.
For I remember that if goodbye makes an end
beginning must walk close upon its heels.
And neither have too much concern
with the heart's friend.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 36.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Song of Cain

... laughter on a dusty road. Laughter always.
Winds go seeking with their children
Muttering, muted of laughter. But the dust
It lifts the voice-ghost of earth carressing feet
In laughter.

O seeking children, sired of the wind and sun,
O dust people, full of the unrest of stray footsteps,
I am led against my will into your secret.

If you know one country find your heart in it.
I must remain an alien in all lands,
Twice over feel birth and death
In every land of birth and death.

There is no word to say my sorrow. . .
There is no word to tell my joy. . .
I climb the trail beyond both with brittle laughter . . .

I am an idioto,
I speak through the foolish who say,
"Wherever I hang my hat that's home."
"Vivo en Santa Maria de Todo el Mundo."
"I am a citizen of the world."
"I am of the proletariat. I am a worker!"
All brothers in the world. All workers and brothers."

O laughter. . .
O ghost voices whispering in dust . . .
Tell not joy or sorrow in laughter . . .
laughter, laughter always, keep it meaningless.
Tell not your secrets, tell not. . .

... laughter in dust . . .
Laughter on a dusty road.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 37.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Dark Shadow Wing

The words lay dark and heavy about my heart.
I am sick with the black nausea.

At the snake pit on the kiva roof at Indian Village
I talked to him—reached out to the clean, true goodness
of him,

Saying in my being: “Comrade, I would know you,
For you have the capacity for friendship.”
Deftly, with sure, slow moving hands he lifted the snakes
for my curious gaze.

My hundred stupid questions he answered with cheerful
care.

Our talk drifted, west, like cloud ships
In the mirror of his voice . . . his hopes. . . his dreams.

But, as sunset came with slow, still steps of beauty,
I made ready reluctantly to go—
Puzzled. There was a wall between us—
That wall made of thought—I willed to cross it before
parting.

As he hesitated, I urged:

“If you would say something, say it.”

A vague, drifting half-smile . . . and then,

“Apparently, you’re all right. But at first

I thought you were qveer and after the one thing.”

O dark shadow wing, take your hot, suspicious breath
elsewhere,

Leave not your evil, festering talon wound upon my mind
and heart.

Fix not the yellow lust of eye and talon on me,
Lift your dark shadow wings from off my heart and mind.

Hateful words, heavy with the dark will to destroy,

Lay not so close upon my heart.

I find oppressive your dark sickness.

I am stricken with the black nausea. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 38.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Twilight

half dark

distortion

fuzzy edged

blurred images.

Shadows without motion

drifting with the light upon their shoulders, blue
limned upon the deep hush of half-born darkness.

. . . I respect one who will admit it . . . some are born that
way . . . not a cheap pose . . . they are justified they have
their well of loneliness. Can he rationalize! . . . preferable,
as companion and escort, charming, dynamic, poised. Boy
friend, a good blind that's why.

And still the cheap pulp-page beguiled:
Is he your boy friend or a Dorian at heart?

II

Dream, always there will be:

the golden barley field; the red silk sail;
a blue sea breasted in foam. . .
and a long phallic and far headland in Lesbos;
white bread and limbs to be shaken bitter sweet.

Apt to be very profitable
tears of the vinegar tree.
Some say, the female is the more deadly of the specie.

And the poor little girl
found accidentally dead
in the mist of this cold and drifting morning
played at the sure, the deadly game,
her knowledge is her death
that in silence knows no weeping.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 39.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Twilight in Variation

let the blurred image escape
 the blue-limned deep hush
 of half-born
darkness

 ... feel not shame for love
 that knows no shame but cheap
 denial.
 Scattered be the doves above
the deeper flowering dream?
 Beguile not the drifting things
distorted in the motion's shadow
where they cling
 hopeless as the broken fiddle string
which once out-dreamed
stars.

II

 From that far headland in Lesbos
... asea of stars
that not being tears are never pearls.
 Not salt but bittersweet this fertile bread
 which one cannot find in the blue sea,
 the red-silk sail ... the golden barley field ...

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 40.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Question for Which No Answer Is Expected

O My Gold Boy
Sweet Adonis
Never
Never again to be the same
for us—
 the soft smooth cheeks
 and their blush
 the eager curved lips
 with their hush

O NEVER!

Why must half-dark
loveliness
and mystery—
which is the deeper
loveliness— HW)
LIKE TWILIGHT ALWAYS fall
splendidly
Before the probing
of warm, blind-fingers?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 41.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Return

I said I'd uproot your memory from my heart.
I said I'd never come again and stand
To look on you, tear-drenched, burdened land,
But I did.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 42.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Dark Heart's Load

Mine is an ache which reaches beyond the Westward surge
In a birth of vision that is a heritage—a dark heart's load.
I am sure I have loved some other land
Like this—that I have touched it with my heart.
O black lake so dark and beautiful—take my heart,
As you take the cold silver streams, deep into your dream
That holds quiet like a lovely face
Gone pale with an eerie white magic on it.
In your passionate tranquillity
I feel the miracle of mist, the flight of young gulls,
A white-sea foaming against patient, immobile stones.
The drawing tide in turning distances, a quiet river
Arched of still bridges, marked by rounded trees
With their roots twisted in a sod that rests beneath the sky
Disconsolate as an old woman worn with a deep and ancient
 weeping.
This the vision that makes a restless ache in my mind,
This the heritage that gives to my heart its dark load.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 42.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Song of Stray Notes

O mine is a song, a strange song,
Of stray notes singing without tune.
Singing without melody, stray notes—
Part of the restlessness that haunts the day.
And I will be leaving soon, very soon.

Memory, sweet-burning, hot white-fire of lost desire,
You are as lonely as the sun-border of the land that gives
you birth.
Compound of dreams that could never be and joy gone
away.

The necromancer chants his incantation—says a spell,
That stirs this darkness as kiss-whisperings the warm clay.

I will be leaving very soon—moving on the way...
A blue chord in this symphony the musician practices but
does not play.

Singing stray notes with no tune—harmony forgotten...
Ah, forgotten—but not muted in cold earth.
This be their loveliness and worth:
A mad composer hides in them,
His endless, sardonic mirth.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 43.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

Memory

Memory is a thing alone,
It walks the dark trails,
Even in the mind it finds no home.
It glimmers through the traveler's tales—
Gold thread on that faded tapestry.

Phoenix it is, born of desire forefilled.
Memory is a vagabond alone,
With the wind for guardian
Walking trails amid the stars,
Across the singing hills,
Down fruitful valleys...
Finding pathway, even on the trackless sea.

Memory is a thing alone,
Walking dark trails to no home,
Fugitive, taking endless flight
Through mind and stone.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 44.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

The Mountain Said

We rode and dusk came
Like the seen magic of an incantation
Changing the shapes of things.
Where there had been a mountain
I saw a cowed priest kneeling
At the altar of the sky.

There was a glimmer of white desert-stars...
The hoofs of the horses whispered in the sand...
What does the mountain say? I asked.
And she answered: Prayer.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 44.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

Of Time in Inyo

(A Melody of Memory)

Weathered: worn by the storms of long years,
Furrowed like old faces. . .
They stand desolate, alone,
Above the old tide line of Owens Lake—
Crumbling ovens, adobe bee hives . . .

But one never thinks of faces until afterward,
In the morning sun-flow one can only see brown hands,
Brown hands of the charcoal burners—at work about the
 bee ovens,
Makers of the fuel for smelter and kiln at far Cerro Gordo.

Yesterday a joy was theirs in working and singing. . .
Today one sees only ghostly brown hands at work
And hears faint, far away snatches of lost song. . .
Change lays here a heavy hand,
A thing of time and timelessness,
And the lake they labored by,
That was blue shining-joy in the sun,
It is gone; gone as they are gone.
The heart of this dead lake lies here like a strange gem,
Jewel-fired with pink and red and magenta gleams,
Iridescent with the transient beauty of a bursting rocket.
Gigantic, yet dwarfed by its setting,
Evil omened, in memory, as an opal.
But this only at its dying heart-center,
 Its outer rim—the huge setting—is a white glare
 That beats against blue-shadowed heliotrope walls
Of mountain, with the insistency of memory,
Marking not even a discord in the sun's song,
For sun-spears of golden melody and the sky,
Are ever supreme over Inyo and Tomesha.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 45–46.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

The Dead of Inyo

The dead go walking in the dust,
The dead go crying for they must,
Possessed of an unreasoning lust

That will let them lie again
Seed in the loins of living men.

Toward all this misery they tend,
Like mad dervishes crying in the wind.
Vague, hurrying figurements they ve been
Long to both life and death akin.
Cloudy shapes of the dry past,
Chieftain, warrior, mother, pioneer,
The unheeding, the foolish, the wise are here,
The proud leader and blind seer.
Those once of brave heart and honest eyes,
How could it be otherwise?

O the dead go walking in the dust,
The dead go crying for they must,
In Inyo!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 46.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Chant of Mountain Worship

Always do I hold thee beautiful to my eyes,
O grey-blue wall of mountains; O famous Sierra.
I look to you each morning,
And find uplift in your strength,
In your pulsating rhythms. . .

And at noon,
As you chant your incantation of the sun,
I look to you for joy.

Each night I sleep, content,
Knowing your cadence of black rhythms,
Blots the stars, high in the west;
Feeling ever secure beneath you,
Even as a small child slumbering at its mother's breast.

Only at the full of the winter-moon am I more—
More than worshipper at the foot of deity.

At full moon of a wintry night, you are white rhythms,
White rhythms of cold enchantment in pools of moonshine,
And the wind weaves of your song a silver net,
In which the palest stars are lost. . . and caught. . .
Never to be found again that night.

'Tis then my spirit dances naked and aflame upon your
heights,
Apart from—yet a part of this magic.
It, too, will be lost. . . and caught . . . and never found,
Except in this pour of silver rapture,
If it continues drunken with this spell
Until the night before Spring!

O mountains,
Do you also wait for this one night?
O Sierra,
Are you beyond this ecstasy of seen melody?
Or in it?

Mountains, do you wish for anything?
Are you content to be rhythms of unheard sound?

I know the answer, snowy chieftains. . .

I know the answer:

You will to be mute, yet sing forever,
Shaking the sky with silent song.

O rhythmic sky-shakers!

O strong singers of the silences!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 47–48.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

Illusion

Mountains garbed in deadly white,
Glisten in the starry night,
Stately, still—towering tall,
 A mad sorcerer's magic wall—
Up-reared in vain to halt the flight
Of bright stars marching o'er their height.

Ofttimes stars whispering as they fall
Tell me there are no mountains there at all.
I believe madly this is right—
Enchantment holds me in her silver thrall,
 A luminous dancer of dark-light
Who must die, as red dawn-stars faintly call.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 48.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

Mesa Trails

O, do not keep my spirit body-bound
In this case of joyless clay;
Do not keep my soul sun
From following you,
Following you on the star-lamped trails—
The dim trails of the mesa.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 49.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Sheep in Spring

O I'll never be happy,
I never will,
Until I follow the sheep!
Across the mesa. . .
Beyond that hill. . .
From cool-shadowed, desert-canyon rest,
To the far snow-meadows of the Sierra crest.

Every Spring I watch aly by,
Theirs an affinity with wide
Horizons and the pale blue sky,
And I want to follow and wonder why—

I wonder why?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 49.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Old Wood Trail

The old wood trail lies in a shallow hollow down the mountain's face

Raising two great arms in a supplication or a plea
That is felt unto the last faint trace of tentacled fingers
That have reached so long and vainly for the sharp Sierra crest,

Where the last, scattered squad of pines feather the sky-line.
Man made nude the slopes here and marred for future eyes
The beat, the pulse, the rhythm that makes the mountain live.

One feels the mountain's tolerance, as though it knew
That their memory lives only in its scars and dying wounds.
And I wonder while recording it, what matter if the story be lost?

Lost as the feverish sweat and toil of timbering that insensible

Rock be held in place as shaft and tunnel gutted the mountains

Of bright, hard treasure, on the far side of Owens Lake.
Man found in these thousands of tree-corpses the means
Of triumphing in the name of progress and the welfare of the future.

And though they disemboweled the earth of a wealth of precious metals

That were stored in vaults for the future, they are dust.
Dust that rides the wind crying its own shame of being wasted.

For dust remembers nights beside the bare waste of waters
When one dreamer pointed out to another the red lights of the home camp

Glowing just below the sharp, dark line of mountain crest
Like lost stars, wandering. But of these thoughts, these feelings

Dust knows there is no record. For it once was a son of Prometheus

Possessed of countless, futile failures built on strife and greed and thwarted hopes,
Recalled only in a marred melody of mountain.

Which do I the favor—these men or the future,
In bringing again to mind
This poor, muted memory of warped and wasted dreams?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 50–51.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Introduction to Bartlett

Bartlett?

No, you are not short on geography,

Local, national or world wide.

For even the natives at times

Are uncertain just where Bartlett is.

Maps?

Maps are of no use—

Bartlett claims the distinction of being on no map

And aspiring to none.

Nothing will put it on the map—

One has difficulty in locating there anyway—

And greater difficulty dis-locating.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 51.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Bartlett

Bartlett consists of eight houses
Each identical with its neighbor
They once were white
But now, border on a dingy grey
Strung out along a rutted roadway
Running downhill to some railroad tracks.
This one and only Street
Bears the name Massachusetts Avenue.
Why not California Ave.?
None of the natives know the answer—
Anyhow, Massachusetts is more appropriate.
No one from Massachusetts lives here.

Across the tracks you can get your mail.
The post-office is open eight to nine A. M.
And Five to Six P. M.
The Store is there too.
But it is always closed.
The Engineer never sees Bartlett when the mail is
 exchanged,
The town is too small
 or the train too long—
I walk along the rutted road.
I find it tedious as the arguments of my discontent.
I wish I were anywhere but in Bartlett!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 52.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Incident

They feel the low laughter, the subtle music of this night.
They watch the stars in their constellations marching.
But they talk to forget—go on talking. . .
Telling stories—raucous, lewd stories of no moment.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 53.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Fragment

Spring never really arrived here
Until the other evening in the sunset
When the first flock of sheep came up the mesa.

They were a wonderful thing
Those sheep
Moving along in the sunset.
Almost they flowed between the white boulders
That glowed softly in the half-light,
The distortion that is twilight here.

A band of sheep always fascinates me.
My heart leaps with joy at their coming.
I go out to meet the shepherds;
Go along with them until they bed the flock for the night.
Last evening it was a French boy,
My own age.
And he brought me all the news
Word of the little things; the happenings, of people and
weather
From out of the desert basin of Inyo-Kern . . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 53.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Summer Night of Bright Stars

Phillip, do you remember a summer night:
When you sat astride my shoulders to gather bright summer stars?
When you called me a good horse and laughed—a sweet,
silver joyous laugh—
That was an answer to the felt cry of the small, red star
pulled down by unseen hands behind the Sierras?
When you and I and the south wind, just the three of us,
raced up the hill together in the soft star-light?
Do you remember:
How tired you were when out-distanced, we stopped to
rest?
How you laid your head in my lap to look for the Seven
Sisters, Big Bear, Orion and the Dipper?
How, when I put my hand on your flushed cheeks, you
asked, “Why are your hands so cool?”
And before I could answer you whispered, “I’m sleepy.”
and I lifted you up cuddled close in my arms, to
sleep.
How next morning you told me the wind had carried you
down to the lamp-lit windows and to bed. . . ?
Phillip, do you remember that summer night of bright stars?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 54.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Nocturne

O, treasured be this sight:
Myriad golden star-bells hung
On the dark, enchanted tree of night!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 54.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Summer Night's Mystery

O night wind in the cottonwoods,
Why do you stir me so?
Why won't you let me go?
I want to go home and to bed.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 54.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

As the City Awakened Where I Had Gone in Answer to a Call

A bell, a horn,
a long-drawn, rasping breath of sound.
The giant turns, restive on his luckless bed.
Racing commuters' cars make congestion in his lungs.
He resents the lifting lid:
drawn relentlessly from his cyclopean-eye,
—his heart resists,
Knowing no joy, no sorrow, no pain,
Not even the solace of the hard, relentless,
grey and earth-drawn sky
that knows one life and death and love
in rain.

He lifts long, grumbling fingers up;
He shakes discontent and fear and hate
down all the empty streets
that echo any dark, stray footsteps
and the rattling garbage tins
when those of night seek sleep.

This they would have me starving share
Though the giant would not know or care,
How much I slaved lost in a dream!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 55.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Portrait of a House

Aslant

 leaning against space

Space that rushed away to meet the skyline.

Eloquent

 with the shout of silence

Disolving slowly, surely in decay.

Faint ghost

 with memories sinking into earth

the child long gone away

No longer any ghost of thought or love

In this dust that lies thick and unbestirred

 Only weary

bare despair

 —And slow fires in decay

Not a memory to live

Hopes and dreams

 are so long fled. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 56.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Undertones

“Whatya think that guy wants?
What’s he up to? What’s his game?
What sorta racket is he tryin’ tapull?”

City voices . . . harshly chant. . .
in their own raucous merriment;
And this be the undertones the city sings
Doing an ironic Edgar Guest:
An insect whine of metallic, little things
In endless, rhyming jest . . .
“Reach not a friendly hand,

Yield not to heart’s command,
Be blase, glacial and cold!
Be hard, unfeeling, bold.

Be part of every thieving band;
Trade useless lives for gold!”
O pitiful place . . . cold wailing walls. . .
O dark canyons where sound drowns tears . . .
In scorn you look above my pity . . . and see
A smoke streaked, wan and grimy sky,
As empty of feeling as the blank faces
In this slave-bound crowd that’s drifting by.

O city, Why must friendship, kindliness, happiness, love
And even pity be things of suspicion?
You scorn my pity, mock my friendship,
Distrust my kindliness or simple Joy,
So that I give you not my love;
And if I should offer it, you would brand me seducer.

O city, you who are czvilized
Yet know a “transient sickness” of despair,
Sit ever so obesely on your stupid haunches,
O stuff, O gorge upon your fetid fare!
But, in all your selfish, smug assurance
Dare to vomit less lustily upon yourself,
For your foul stench is such a weighty care.
ELIGH IT. With. ERTS

That is what is the matter with the world. . .
All this speed I mean,
Rushing from place to place
Getting no feeling but emptiness. . .

Four hours ago, I was in Los Angeles.
Now I'm in San Diego.
I just hopped down from L. A. to Dago,
As the native son patois has it.
That trip once meant something.
Old travelers felt something when they made it.
They got the feel of the country—
Gave the land something of themselves.

Sibilant, singing unrest in the monotonous whir
Of rubber tires passing over asphalt miles.
Like this discontent that is on us—
This going nowhere fast.
Something is going from us that we need—
Something we can't do without.

Hot coming out of the Los Angeles east side.
Everybody irritable . . . resentful
Of others sharing their enforced discomfiture.
The bus jerked stops between red, dusty streets.
The city exhaled its hot, sweaty breath through wide-open
windows.
Something hard, vacant and uncaring on the passenger's
faces.
Faces like the viaduct across the empty sand-wash of the Los
Angeles River.
Two loud talking Jewesses with circulating library novels on
their laps
Exchange delicious anecdotes across the aisle,
Glancing superciliously at the men near them.
BIG BLONDE. "Look at that beginning willya?"
Elizabeth was tall and young and supple.
This one begins in San Pedro" . . . SPEND THE NIGHT . . .
A lot about those places in L. A. . . ."
"I'm sure gettin' the low down on swank in Beverly Hills!"
They hand the books back and forth rapidly and laugh

without meaning . . .
Or, maybe it's only I who don't understand.
A sweet wind off the orange trees with a cool, clean feel
to it.
Dark green and small and round those trees full of golden
fruit.
All the way out of town this puffy mouthed blonde next to
Has been yawning. Now she lies back with her eyes closed
Listening with furtive little smiles to the Jewesses.
Holding her hair from blowing with a short, fat hand, the:
nails red,
Startling, like carnivorous claws after the kill.
Up the aisle a fussy little man with thick lens glasses,
Struggles to hang a cheap panama under one of those snap-
back-over-head-contrivances
That makes bus passengers comfortable.
"Our Motto Service and Comfort"—with speed and
schedules.
He gets a smile from his seat companion on whose head a
jaunty sea-cap rides with nonchalance.
A smile full of the quiet of lonely places,
Not inviting to intimacy those tiny wrinkles about his eyes . . .
Sun squint. . .
Easily tired old ladies whisper nervously in a hot fuss.
A young divinity student moves about administrating com-
fort and cheer;
Giving helpful suggestions and a smug assistance between
cant phrases,
Showing the disgruntled travelers the secret of working seat
setbacks, opening windows, lifting foot rests. . .
He presses the seaman into service—
Past the orange belt now and avocado trees stand glistening.
The sun makes bright their leaves like the magic of a fairy
tale.
A few dusty olives pass like old wizards loosing themselves
in a silver dust cloud.
The road swings and rolls across sun-yellowed coastal hills.
oe season—hot, clean air full of the joy of the sun-flow.

Wheat hay in shocks and bales scattered haphazardly across
the fields, where the workers dropped them.
A few more orchards surrounded by stands of Eucalypti to
break the destructive sweep of the wind. . .
Why is a Eucalyptus tree like a vagabond?
Always striding away into distances . . . ragged . . . a
vagabond.

Hot bean fields make the sweep of the hillside like a pale
green wave
Crested by harvesters in lovely blue shirts of workers.
The boss in white. He stands above them directing their
progress—
Red geraniums grow man-high along the back walls . . .
violent in their passionate outburst.
Why can't red seem solemn, still, even quiet,
When it is not a part of a sunset?

San Diego outskirts and a buff and brown cluster of build-
ings . . .
Packing and slaughter quarters for a large meat concern.
Grey battleships on the blue harbour . . . a slow moving
tender coming in on the sunset.
Evening settling down . . . two tall buildings above what
looks like a child's cardboard city . . .
Mostly low roofs . . . a hot, human concentration on exist-
ence
There were some other things I thought coming down this
afternoon
Some other things . . . I don't remember though.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 57–61.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Tower Song

(ONE PORTRAIT OF THE LOS ANGELES CITY HALL)

Lifted high
like a phallus toward the sky
This towered song
makes a cry
over intense—
over long—
This desire finds
no secret dark hollow of indifferent sky!
Pushed slowly upward,
erect, unsatisfied
it awaits only the senility of decaying Time
to melt its manly fusion of earth and fire.
Toward the skyline on their knees . . . a wave backs up on
itself then tumbles forward.

Terribly lonely—
These miles of even green rows. . .
These desolate little houses crouching beneath tall trees. . .
Trees ragged . . . proud . . . somehow unable to be friendly
to four walls.

The burnt-off right of way of the railroad loses itself in a
yellow horizon glow,
Like a black ribbon banded with silver threads . . . the bright
rails

Divide with sharp definiteness the glaring pastures . . .
A roan stallion with his brood mares . . . sleek and well-

Crop hungrily along the low fence that protects a small corn
patch.

At Capistrano Beach the first view of the sea; the blue ocean
breasting the shore whitely

Under palisades spotted with bright scarlet patches of flow-

Maybe this is the way the earth bleeds . . . but there is no
reason.

Twenty minutes from San Diego. . .
Low suburban houses, California Spanish. . .
Deep, cool windows and red tile roofs—
Rambling walls, high and white; enter our rancho through
 this iron-grill gate. . .
The houses seem friendly . . . I wonder what kind of people
 live in them?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 61–62.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

I Ran Away

Yesterday I saw a girl.
I've seen millions of girls.
Atlantic City, Miami, Palm Springs,
Caliente, Los Angeles, Hollywood.
All over the country!
I've known city girls . . .
Naive girls . . . sophisticated girls. . .
And girls in the business.
I've been around. I've seen lots of girls,
Millions of girls!
But this girl—
Yesterday I saw her; today I ran away.
Ran away because I knew her beauty was an illusion.
Not illusion. No not that. Not a reflection.

Not a dream.
I ran away because I know a true thing
Can be changed by a single scratch . . .
Or smirched by drifting dirt.

Deep noon had caught the screaming street
In a sweaty grasp. From coughing motor exhaust,
Stale perfume-nausea drenched the air.
Wilted awnings drooped above small, frightened
noon-shadows.
Food odors mingled . . .
The taste of the city was in every breath.
I paused.
I read the menu on the steam clouded window.
Half curious—I can't tell you why—
I watched people eating.
And then I saw her.
She emptied her coffee cup and set it down.
She sat staring; looking at the thick, white cup.
I was watching her.
I was looking at a white cup too. . .
Her face was like a white. . .
Not a heavy porcelain one.
She sat looking at the cup.

There was nothing else on the table. . .
No signs that she had eaten anything else.
I knew she had eaten nothing else.
She didn't look as if she had. . .
She just sat there. I was looking at her.
I had a dollar seventy-seven cents in my pocket.
I didn't have anything else.
Just a dollar seventy-seven cents.

It was then I got afraid. . .
I hurried and shoved through the crowds. . .
I was afraid.

I've seen millions of girls . . . everywhere.
I saw her yesterday and was afraid. . .
I ran away. . .
Yesterday I saw her. . .
Today I'm seeing her. . .
I know I'm going to go on seeing her. . .
A thousand times . . . a million places. . .
In all of next year's miles!

ADDRESS: FO) Ay Criy

O make me be completely mad;
Have stars about me sing;
Let there be no sorrow, pain—
Nor anything to dream!

Yours is a cruel unseemly ring
Of noise that desperately does cling
To me as something all unreal—
Yet, neither joy of strength or beauty
Do I feel.

I am no part nor whole,
In this your crowding pavement-cry:
My heart is living stone, not warm, not cold,
For you to drag it out to die!

Escape, for me, lies in the deep earth-heart of Spring
That makes green fire burn across the hill,
I, too, would be one without breath alone, always
Know only that strange, hushed still.

O let me be mad and charmed to sing
Loudly, as dawning stars that are drowned
In the sweetness of sun, wind or rain,
Without knowledge of pain or sorrow, having found
Not even dreams!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 63–65.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

November 11, 1936

Eighteen years are past
 And on these California vacant lots,
 Greening in the fall rains,
 Soft, new grass is the battlefield
 Of small boys playing f

a

s

transports, booming guns, heroic death
 and sobbing aeroplanes—

One child is still, lying alone,
 Hugging the earth, face downward.
 “Won’t they let you play?” I asked. In injured tone
 He answered, “I’m dead in No-Man’s Land! I shouldn’t
 have heard
 You when you spoke.” Then above his companion’s
 frantic yells,
 “I like playing dead from gas!
 How sweet the damp earth smells,
 And the new grass!”

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 66.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

To the Poet Dead of a Great War

Ah, poet dead,
You, Alan Seegar, who had a rendezvous
Pledged with a word more true than death,
You who failed not and bled in Flanders Fields
Where one foresaw
The poppies blow between the crosses row on row—
You, John McCrae,
How soon after that was it that you
Were dead with action done?
And, Joyce Kilmer, you who wrote the epitaph
Telling how you would be
Dead in youthful prime
Never to laugh nor love again
Nor taste the summertime. . .
And you, Rupert Brooke,
Becoming one of the rich dead
Giving your red sweet wine of youth—work, joy, immor-
tality,
For the echo of bugles in some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England's:
DO YOU KNOW? DO YOU SEE THE WORLD FOR WHICH
You DIED IN VAIN?
A world that blithely trunkates China? Strangles helpless
Ethiopia?
Persecutes humanity in the name of race? Raises high the
despot's ego, craft and hate
In Italy, Germany and Spain?
Can you, dead singers choked in dust,
Ask uprisen workers be merciful to these usurpers of your
deathless hope?
Ask that they be absolved of your murders and this more
final shame?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 67.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Dedication of Purpose

Youth, you who have this heritage, this glory . . .
You who have yet to know, what price glory . . .
Heed not the drumming of this specter with red hands,
Heed him not, nor his million monuments that stand
Entombed upon dusty miles of shelves in silent tumult.
Your legacy is made of more than superstition, tyranny,
 slavery, war—
Even this warning has in it love, beauty, understanding
 peace—
Beating down the dark of ignorance,
For the urge to peace is the ever-living heart
Of youth long dead on ancient battle fields . . .

They who died for home—and King.
They who bled for God—and Empire.
And those staring dead; those sightless, staring dead,
Who died for Liberty, Fraternity, Equality . . .;
Died, “making the world safe for Democracy” . . .
Afire with the innocence of youth—
Deluded by sniveling sentimentality of past sacrifices
They cried: Lafayette we are here!
Overhead, whining shells intoned a mad dirge
That all too soon was patterned in a red grotesque—
“St. Peter, open up the golden gate,
For they’re coming, they’re coming. . .”

Think you of the blood of all those dead young men. . .
That red life is your heritage; their blood stains your hands,
It cries out to yox for brotherhood and a fruitful growing.
‘Comrades, be more than for Peace!’ it cries.
‘Be against WAR!’

Youth! It will take strength to meet well this challenge, this
 demand.
But, only against War—and for PEACE alone—
Live out your life, upon this dark and burdened land. . .

O- AVERAGE MAN!

I am glad I am not an average man,

An average man, an average man!
For the average man
Is a little, frightened drudge,
The wage slave of fear and trembling.
He produces wealth for joy,
And Joy knows him not.
The average man toils in great unhappiness—
Dreaming sees Joy running on the bright hills,
A naked boy. Hears the bubbling, liquid laughter
Of that carefree child as he strews his sunny, golden flowers
elsewhere.

For the average man, Joy remains always a simple boy,
Who ts seen running unclothed across the hills,
Distributing gifts carelessly in the far distances.
This vision pleases the average man,
He ts content with this dreaming.
O I am glad I am not an average man!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 68–69.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Triad

(For Patience Pegan)

I

She reads the brittle treatise
Labeled, "The Surpassing Farce."
Feels with palsied hand her skull,
Yellow and crumbling.
"Education," "culture," "literature,"
"Science," "problems," "redeemers,"
Books . . . newspapers . . . radios . . .
Blathering Sociologists and Economists.
 The MASSES and a hurdy-gurdy.
 The MASSES and a merry-go-round.
 The masses, The Masses, The MASSES!
Joy riding somewhere? Going to hell?
Well, maybe. But they don't care—
A joy ride to hell—a joy ride to war,
A JOY RIDE!!! Millions starving for a joy ride.

II

The candle sputters—goes out—
The cold from the dripping walls of the cell,
The beaded moisture cuts blue-black through the flesh . . .
Weep not over the sorrows of the body . . .
Cudgel your brain, "What number of angels can dance,
Dance on the point of a needle, dance?"
The cold light mounts to the sky,
The blue cold mounts to the brain,
Water changes to ice and yet is the same.

"How many angels can dance? Dance on a needle?
How many angels can dance on the point of a needle?"
Your interest is a deplorable lack . . .
Science saves: "What do you know of the toes,
The delicate toes of Star-fishes?"

III

His symbol was a cross, this old god forgotten.
His symbol was a cross, they still are piling bones.
Pyramids of skulls . . . frescos of fleshless ribs . . .
Bare thigh bones . . . bleached and white . . .
Dice of a vanquished god, playing odd man,
Matching three cornered with Fate and Time.

Devotees and novitiates, prophets and saints,
Priest and Seer, worshipper and unbeliever,
Blood flows, drums beat in old Mexico . . .
Brown flesh is crucified, lies dark upon the day.
Blood flows in sacrifice and flows knowing all blood,
All sacrifice and flowing blood, all blood and silly symbol
Are futile and empty. Are at cross purposes.

O learn the prayer that needs must be . . .
Learn the prayer that seeks only mercy . . .
For greatest mercy is this that flows of all cross purposes . . .
The mercy of all crosses . . . Pray for strong living, sure
Death.
All sacrifice is useless . . . all cross purposes
Are made of sacrifice. Ask the great mercy of blood and
symbol.
Make your prayer for the mercy of strong living . . . taste
the DEATH!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 70–72.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Epitaph for an Unknown Poet Fallen in Spain

You died for rights and peace,
You found a peace in dying;

Your brave-breathing songs give you lease
On life that shall not know this crying
Of shells and red surcease.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 72.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Myth of the Living Stones

In a field under the stars a man fled with terror at his heels. A stone arose in his path and great was the impact thereof. Sheltered devoid of fear he was saved. He came to thank the stone and in awe of silence gave it love and one of the thousand names of God.

To the stone he gave dominion over his fears and in a later day over his desires he extended its domain. And in the field was a great festal ground wherein fear and longing made seasons of hate and love, desire and fulfillment. Always there were flames and the shadows of dream. And there was love of man for his woman, like a star fallen whispering in the long grasses; love of man for his children, like the buffeted joy of a tree in the waves of the ultimate wind; the love of man for his conquered beasts, the horse, the ox, the dog, like the cry of earth to sun; and there was the love of man for Beauty, Wonder, Mystery—the life that was not his life in a dew-drop, a flower, an insect, a song—a love as multiple as its thousand and one names—the love that reached to the love of man for man and forgetting the other face of longing asked only wings, to reach further toward the stars, to make of hope a destiny.

Builed of a half-blind groping in the labyrinth of conceived limitation, belief was born, an animated, breathing, living stone.

Theirs is the still and settling knowledge that beats against the rock riven ribs of earth but without silence or limitation save the understanding of man who has drawn them to fugitive bodies—these walking prophets of the living stone. Walking against their will these wayfarers find and mark the secret power-roads of the universe. Driven by all the imaginative struggle of man.

Of these was Myhr.

Myhr who walked crying the struggle of passion with passion; the struggle of the one with the many; the battle of mind with body; the hacking onslaught of desire and denial. Articulating the tears, the pity, the hopes, the desires, the joys, the triumphs of men.

And in his passing Myhr drew into himself the misunderstanding, the hate, the fears, the childish, self-destroying greed that was to lift him once again into that greater limitation, silence. Into the silent knowing unarticulated of dream.

Myhr once was a star who longed to descend and walk the peaks of earth. Myhr eternal and fugitive was born of stone in a field pregnant with starlight that quickened into life at the touch of fear. Myhr has been gorged on the fruit of the flock and field, drunken of wine and blood, charmed of sweetest music, made to play on lyre and harp and pipes, been given the form of demon, beast and bird—and his worshipper's own image.

Myhr is a fugitive with goat's feet or no feet at all. Myhr is of one form or no form. His love is eternal being builded of that which it serves. There is no other love like the love of Myhr. This love of the living stones is an agony of piteous tears and riotous laughter leaping backward to stillness. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 73–74.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Love as Always

The frost of this grim irony has stilled us. —Robin Lampson.

“Love as always” was her indictment’s final irony,
With no extenuation or excuse continued 12 typed pages
through
And prefaced by a note giving not the slightest key
To this “perfect situation” involving “you”
In “affection,” “weakness” and “pity”
With debits many and your credits few
Except that you be both “intelligent” and “witty”—
Seems as a lover your political views fail of being strong
Since you cannot sing of fiery primal-love in this squalid city
Where workers lack food, shelter, hope and song
And are beaten and more cowed than any yellow alley pup
So they remain slaves because their thinking’s wrong.
Perhaps they too should “shoulder humanities grief and
grow up”—
Since we agree: strong liquor is not brewed but held in a

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 75.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Too Long I Have Looked for Love

Too long I have looked for love in the wrong places,
Been a foolish drinker of dust and glitter-glory
From ancient tales, while in every sounding street the faces
Cry in hunger, care, despair, the threadbare story
Of hope more binding than any empty, belief-chanted spell
 That blinds the true, the strong, the brave to all the gory
Useless dying of youth in any red-battle hell!
Love must not hark back to this false dream
Ruled of small gods, by dead poets sung too well,
For though death be not as final as it seem
Who can say they had love, or dream of it, once they fell?
 O I am tired of old romance, of the grave-worn loves it
embraces,
Tired of all that makes false security among the tawdry and
 unclean
Too long I have let my mind and heart dwell in such places!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 76.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Suffer My Escape

There is always one who escapes. —Old Irish saying.

O mocking Fates; O lovely laughing Graces,
Let me absorb the vital “J” into that reality
None have dared to give it. For madness traces
Its hot desire and design to be
In lightening across my dark, thundering mind
That blindly rages to be free
Of all constricting bonds of little gods of human kind—
I have a dream as magic as the moon on distant hills.
O hushed, little gods, give me leave to find
The hard, clean bone of life without the fleshly frills
That make this dark passage meaningless and casual
By destroying Beauty. It is insidious this hate that kills.
Put the sharp, hard joy back into my life tragical—
Suffer my escape from the mediocre and the gradual!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 76.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Amoroso

Mors ultima linea rerum est.—Horace.

Love

I want our love
to always be in
 warmly naked:
like the newly risen sun
upon my face. . .
with a soul
blue-nebulous
as remembered quiet
in the folded hands
of a once adored
and lonely
saint. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 77.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Avowal

I would fill my eyes with you
As I have filled them with the quiet splendor of the stars;
I would be close to you as deep, warm loam unto a fragile
 flower,
And I would shelter you with gentle, green caress of summer
 blown trees—
I would—But like the wooing wind, I flee
Asking only a forgetting to make me free—!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 78.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

You Are My Last Dream

No time can steal,
No fold of earth make mute,
 No forgetting make less real.
You play love on a silver flute;
My youth is lost in that dark scheme.

No time can steal
Magic remembered of your singing spell
More sensuous than storied passion flowers
Marking the paths to lovely hell
Where burns love trembling as ours
 With no reassuring belief to heal.

Magic remembered of your singing spell
Dims all despairing desire I would feel
 For eternity that mountains, sky and sea seem
 To endure—your living is my heart's appeal.
You are my last dream
 No time can fell!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 78.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Evening

We shared the first frail moon that spring,
The gentle, weeping rain.
And dark upon the wind
The blown acacia came to ease
Our aloneness on that still hill
That knows no blame.

We shared the hill,
Our tears made bitter rain;
We left the hill—each with his aloneness
Burning deeper than flame—
You seeking in the dark
From whence you came.
I reaching for the drenched stars °
Beyond me still.

We share the blame
That you went down our hill
Alone with darkness—
And the rain.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 79.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Shard

Awakening

 a fragment singing in my mind
a bright gold shard of melody.

 It has ghostly beauty beyond the day.
It is Beauty's dark-dreamed singing
Far away

 Where were you dreamed soft love?
I remember that once you were mine
... before you went away!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 79.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Grey Eyes

Grey eyes are those
in which the stars
find their quiet dream—
 their muted melody of love,
 though a wonderous thing
 does ask, How long? How long?
Grey eyes are hushed,
and inarticulate
with thoughts of dawn.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 80.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Signe

All day hearing wind-bells blowing,
Small, silver wind-bells in a black pagoda.

You have been here with me:

Your flame jacket with flowing sleeves
And embroidered figuring of flowers
Brightening my eye; gladdening my heart;
Heightening the memory-luster of your blue-black hair
And your full, red lips lifted for a butterfly kiss
of sipped joy.

O Signe,
Always in my dream, sweet as little wind-bells,
Silvery voiced, little wind-bells,
Blowing in a black pagoda . . .
Signe—Blessing,
Like small, silver wind-bells blowing . . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 80.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Answer

You? You are my torch,
Lighting the dark cavern
Of these grey, miasmal days.
You hold that secret joy
Which makes divine
This common clay.

In some broad horizon
There may be a greater depth.
But, O clinging arms—
And sweet, young lips!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 81.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Retort Impromptu

I love you so
That I shall never love again.
I love you as I have loved the sun,
The earth, the rain, the wind.
My love for you is made
Of all the loves I ever had
Or would have had,
And of all those loves
I loved in vain.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 81.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Vague Summer Memory

In the summer pasture he found an old horseshoe.
He tossed it over his shoulder and made a wish.
It is winter now. I wonder what he wished
On that old horseshoe found in a summer pasture?

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 81.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

When I Go to Meet My Lover

O, it is midnight
Full of terrible black beauty
And a mad god's thunder—
My puny world is torn asunder,
Grey shadowed by this anger
 Of an undying god,
 Impotent in solitude, impotent in thunder!
All the grey day's end
I dreamed being a lover;
I sang being a poet—
Some day I shall be old, Dreamer and Lover,
I shall die of no song—
Not having the dream of stopping a god's curious madness!
So I dreamed and sang with the mountain's solitude
And this night, being young, I go down to meet my lover—
I go down to meet my lover
While this jealous god makes thunder
In far dark mountains—
He is mad with drinking solitude
And the black beauty that is wonder!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 82.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Modern Ate to an Unwilling Adonis

Your joy is a silver pool
In which my laughing eyes and lips
Are never mirrored.

Your life is a closed door
Upon which my crying desire beats
—Must beat, incessantly,

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 83.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Knowledge

I love you cruelly,
Or, I did,
Which is almost the same thing:
For there will always be
A cold poplar;
White stars;
A Winter's wind;
And the thin ghost of that "love"
Astride my joy.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 83.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Regret

Stonily, I said good-by,)
Outwardly still, dry of eye;
But there were tears I do confess,
Restrained, but tears none the less;
And I sobbed, what never should be said,
While stitching up my heart with little words!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 83.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Letter: To Be Delivered for Understanding Heart to Heart

Dear,

These recall you and outworn pain—
QUIET . . .

quiet that is everywhere
(everywhere but in my breast)

This too familiar street
(it has not changed
its meaning that once shouted
love . . . home . . . you)

Yellow dusk-lamps are dimly drumming,
Even as my heart against the night . . .

And the thin ghost of joy
bestriding memory finds
no swift cold flight . . .

Being caught—Snared!
Black-fretted in a moon-fixed silhouette of leaves
Writhing on this tired, grey pavement . . .

I lift my eyes . . .

Blown stars like restless Spring
Haunt me with a beautiful agony—
your name . . .

Discontented is my protest
Like the futile sorrow of the guttered rain!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 84.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Muted Thoughts for Sundown

... though stealing in unbidden accents.
It remains sensuous.
Cherished as an expectant dream
of soft dark hands.

Can this shadowed emotion—
be a subtle thing?

Four grey ships
float nebulous as fog
with sails furled
with none aboard
with no hand upon the wheel
drifting gloriously afire

... emerging with a sure sigh
into the cool-calm waters beyond turbulence
 gently touching
 gently soothing
 to the mind a hand
 upon a feverish prow.

In this fleeting moment
gods taste glory in its ever changing form
even in distortion
of Love's remembrance.

Why hunger?
Why sharp expectancy?
It leaves no ash
this torch burning out
beyond darkness.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 85.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Desire

O unreal pain,
Why must you tear at my loins,
Like a dark, evil bird
of consciousnessless ill-omen;
Sinking in this burning flesh
yellow talons to pierce me
through and through. . . ?

Yours is too mad, too shrill
a cry;
And all unanswerable!

Ruff your ebon plumage.
Make me shiver with your screams.
But I will not—cannot believe this thing,
Dreamed only on the cosmic plane
of fiends!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 86.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Conversational Overtone

. . . you are a small cloud on a mountain.

—Now you're an old lady

and a little girl.

A burnt sacrifice in a heap of grey ashes.

 If one can dig far enough in grey ashes
he uncovers live coals. . .

Always you walk away from those who love you—

I watch always outside of those whom I must love.

I will forever be digging you out of corners.

 You need never worry
 for ever I dig you out of your corners;
Through all eternity.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 86.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Once in Four

(To Be Read Aloud on February 29 of Any Year)

Most cruelly remembered and resolved
this sure, slow death—
This accumulated soft and hungry laughter
marking the anniversary of our long year—
That which comes but once in four
made of slow moments in the deepest blue intensity
reaching for this day always a white star-year away.
Love is that wonder never old
recurrent as the dawn, the wind, the rain.
Stars were made to drive men mad
and make them love the earth again.
In this love the cruel intensity survives
memories and the crumbling years;
and meaning is that dream that never dies
in the return love must have
and does demand.

The sere and yellow fingers of our now
reach to count the inarticulate, splendid,
nameless and unborn tomorrows,
that live ever beyond sundown—
In that undiscovered land where dream is never old nor cold
and no calendared today inflicts its movement on eternity
and calls it Time.
Where love is an exquisite pleasure,
ageless and tender as the green of each returning spring,
and finds rebirth in the white and flocculent ash of each
desire.

Once in four
our year is made of shadowy years
that cheats the fear
that know the full, hollow, hungry laughter
no love can know.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 87.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

On That Hill

Out across the hill
My heart was broken.
Because I have grieved
The moon went pale;
A bird sang;
A word was spoken;
I failed love, finding it
Too cruel, too sweet, too sure . . .
Yet, the blossoming plum
Makes a white explosion
On the blue of this March day.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 88.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Beatae Memoriae

O pity me! Not with foolish tears . . .
But with the wisdom of a heart's song
Telling how the moon to dust is crumbling!
Pity me! Make me a thousand times dead,
You, who hold in air-spun enchantment
My immortal heart, my eternal brain—
Take away this consciousness and recognition
That must forever revive nameless, outworn pain!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 88.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Two in Love

HE: asking no little thing
accepting all, even
differences.

SHE: believing in her understanding
asking only the possible, that
he be different.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 89.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Stray

Every barrier was down, burned away
By all the love I had for you
That never stayed.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 89.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Letters

A last incense on our cold altar,
I burned your letters today.
In the pale smoke—
Above this last passion of flame—
I saw your face, smiling
A little sadly, pensive,
As a pagan goddess smiles
Being pleased of dreams,
Passing as this homage
Rendered you.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 89.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Of

to love . . . to be forgotten . . .
Living the dark edge of dark
in a cruel breathless dream
of white surf-petaled days . . .
That flower passage down the dark
that strips the bare necessity in bud . . .
 to make a flight graph of wild geese—
 to bridge the living with the dead—
 to make this mockery of love
 that steals meaning and survival
 in a memory . . .
Love is not memory nor a part of it:
to love . . . to be forgotten like the
charted stars—

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 90.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Because

I would inscribe your memory
On the crumbling rock,
 Because you live with friendship,
not the word, but the deed;
 Because you are that seed
sown of the gods and not forgot;
 Because you know it is not a cruel necessity
that chisels the hard line upon the face of Time;
 And because you serve not Time
Nor any Bitter God!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 91.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Noted in Passing

Pedro:

There is something fluttering in you like a little bird.
Before that alone I would be tender, human, worshipful.
But I claim no equality. You can claim none with me,
I give you no pity, no humble equality—
For, there is something fluttering in you
Like a little bird.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 91.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Minor Portrait

There were few subtleties in her life—
Softly shut doors. . .
Ensuing long silences. . .
And the hollow echo of footsteps,
In the emptiness of the hall. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 92.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Leandro

Warm as sunlight, the smile upon his face—
Quick to mask the questing desire
Burning dark in his black eyes.
A savage is alive within his breast—
Sharp and cruel and hard as an obsidian knife
Cutting a heart in sacrifice—
Bleeding is his heart, held
Suspended toward the sun of hope
By a blind, chanting priestess of myth
Whose breath is his own unwilling belief.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 92.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Miniature

Years
Had walked their passing
On her face.

Her face
Was a time-worn map
Of roads.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 93.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Phillip

He loved horses and the land;
Dreamed of hearth fires, children and living
Quiet as twilight's magic descending.
But, charmed of the deep sea-blue
He winged the wind. And longing
Came to dull his eyes to sea-shore green.
His soul grew sick of the wind's driving whine
The lure of Deirdre—yet he could not break
This spell, lost in a white wave's ending. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 93.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Angela

Oh, Angela, plaything of the brazen street,
 Others may presume and brand you with red shame,
 While gossiping, which to bitter souls is sweet,
 Of your sensual, bartered love, profane.
 But I know of you secret trust . . .
 Which makes utter denial of this thing,
 For I have seen you leave the brothels of men's lust,
 When in the dawn the chiming mission bells did ring.
 Left behind was vulgar jest of sinful, scented bower,
 In sorrowful humbleness you entered the dark church nave,
 To find the solace of a quiet, prayerful hour,
 While lifting your heart where altar candles blaze.
 I cannot understand this paradox; nor that of sin.
 But if He knows, this hour must be sacred unto Him.
 pet Hd a) Bl oes

She moves with feline assurity and guile,
 Hiding with youthful years her awful wile
 That flutters all about her like black lace
 And veils with shadowy allure her real face.

Her face that is coarse and hard and overwise.
 Seared by winds of evil from out her eyes
 Heavy with sensuous knowledge—latent in full lips,
 Cruel, twisted and red as a lash of whips. . .

Her face is cold and harsh and masked by lies.
 Hot winds of evil blow from out her eyes
 Spreading thoughts like poison philters in this place:
 Tempting to base desire with grasping grace.

MINDS

A mind like the tongue of a cat lapping around the world
 tasting the rancid butter of thoughts and of things.
 A cultural mind spinning its unthinkable web around and
 around before strengthening by hooking things together
 with belief with reiteration.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), pp. 94–95.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Profile of an Afternoon

Sweet contentment once was mine,
Alone we sat within a room,
Saying nothing—just passing time,
Swiftly fled, all too soon.

You cut busily, pretty flowers,
(Really, I tried to read my book,)
By the yard you measured hours,
(Ask, I'll pay for what I took!)

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 96.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Portrait of a Dreamless Young Man

Dust of fatuous faith blinds him to Beauty,
Cold truth brings a frozen joy to his mind
Arranging a static world.

He lives the unwordable existence of fools,
Who, denying growth, resist being covered
By the quiet, brown hand.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 96.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Then

You are going away,
For you do not like it here.
There is nothing I can say now,
But that I shall miss you—
Miss you, when you have gone.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 96.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

A Tourist Lady

Well, here we are at home again,
After a record trip of dawdlying
Over the desert. What do you think of that?
Well, at any rate, here we are.
Quite happy, thank you.

We stayed in Taos and Santa Fe.
I bought a Mex blanket.
So colorful and simply gorgeous!
See, it has a face in the center:
And the Aztec calendar figures on the side,
 Marching as to war, that's what this heathen thing says to
 me.
When I sing my notes get all mixed up in its
Red and white and green—
In the red and red-and-yellow and yellow
And the blue, the blue-and-white and white—
 It's a fact! Don't you love it?
So perfectly lousy!
Big enough to cover the wall back of the davenport.
Yes, I thought of that the minute I saw it!
I bought this Indian Turquoise bracelet too.
Here on my arm where it is likely to stay.
We stayed all night in one dreadful camp.
We stayed several days in Santa Fe. Yes,
In Santa Fe!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 97.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

Alessandro

(To Victor Jory)

Laughing singer,
sad as the violin of night
that haunts us with beauty till we weep,
yours a cruel and driven flight
from legend deep
in the intense throb of yesterday—
Living—crying out the awful injustice
that surely, someday will die
before this love—winged beyond romance and pageantry!

I am choked by your laughter
heavier with sadness than tears,
as you walk naked down the track
of the never dying years,
drawing about yourself the Indian silence
born of stars and the dark-dream we call night;
though all must know that beyond the sun of memory
there is that too bright, too secure, too sure
for any feeling, thought or word.

“God!” you cry—repeating thrice from dust your still
despair
that sweeps aside the blue, the yellow, the orange and green,
the red, the gold, the violet, grey and brown—
the haunting song—the clicking heel—the intoned
prayer—
the sad, torn faith your mind, but not your heart, has found.

O, the cumulative power of that sound
that grows intense in the silence of your waiting—
in the slowly lifted hand of your farewell—
It would deflate much deeper lungs—
For it bursts all walls of spirit
and having reached this height of pain
surely this heart-torn cry repeated
once again, will shatter the blue, indifferent sky!

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 98.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Pageant

Long afternoon—
slow cloud drifts and the lazy floating fluff
of cottonwoods. . . making summer snow.
In the deep hush of this desert sun
that is the warm heart of God—
slow laughter—shouts—and the long chant as the
dancers come.

It is sheep shearing time—
Indians. . . rancheros. . . Dons. . . vaqueroes. . .
And the lovers singing with their hearts
deep in the dark beyond the marching stars. . .
And the long journeying down the yesterdays . . .
the reds and yellows and greens,
the reds and the blues and the whites . . .

In abrupt challenge the mountains rear their shambling
strength
Against the mighty sky—
Theirs the muted shout
louder than the pause in music,
louder than the tortured cry of silence. . .
The dark cool of cottonwoods is filled with the rush of
desert winds
tossing fluff-foam high about the acrid scented pepper trees
jeweled with red berries and dancing in green lace—
Perhaps with the hope of tomorrow
or a ghost of yesteryear.

Inside of me there is a deeper hush
than the mountains infinite challenge
thrusting upward like a spear,
and over me as over these mountains
wrath does burn in a sunset
of orange and yellow flare of flame
that is blown through with the purple trceries of smoke. . .

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 99.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Lupita Dances

Eupita, %%.%

Yes, she dances here at this cantina

One small beer? . . . There's Nina . . .

Si, señor, whiskey? Wine? Pulque? Tequilla?;

Patience. In a little time you'll see her.

Juan, he waits .

By yonder door, with the guitar .

Un momento more . . . This bar?

Si, señor, closed! . . . No drinks now for you

Lupita dances, I watch and care not what you do?

Lupita

Señor, the languor and the flame of love .

Entrancing . . . little dove

Si, señor, true! She is to love the clue,

Though but a tiny, wingéd flame of rosy hue.

Luring men

That is, señor, her woman's trade . . .

A tneloncholy bore . . . but this blade

Assures that none, to her charms, draw near,

Save I—and I'm her lover 'way from here.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 100.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Epitaph Requested by a Poet

Have this engraved upon the urn
Where my ashes would have lain
If I had been a lover less
Of fire, sun, wind and rain:

He lived in terror of the wind
And sought for stars he could not find.

Blind with tears meaningless as pain
Or the soft dream-mutterings of rain.

And found his love dark in the sun
Because such glory in his heart was hung

As quickly stills the poet tongue and lyre
Or destroys the hungering soul in fire.

This fledgling's flight against the stars is done
For a despised brown earth it is as yet unsung.

Publication. *Eggs in a Blue Bowl* (Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1937), p. 101.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

BLADES OF BREATH

Four sequences issued under the name Toko-Natsu Akogare, 1942

Finger Tracings I

My need being great, I learn to sing
Other than my native tongue—
My thoughts further wing!

Lamenting the barrenness of my days,
Very much alone I ride home on the
 reverberating trolley
Crowded with late revelers and workers.

There is a palm on this lonely hill
 (where I live in one room)
That has a gray straggly beard and wild hair
And is a jinni.

This night is cold (I burn like a flame)
There is a thousand-mile ring around
 the moon
Made of white magic.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 12.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Finger Tracings 2

Enthroned in the great desk chair
Alone in the dusty store room
i eat dinner from a bag.

Yesterday and tomorrow are two
Whom I know not.

He is utterly what he is
When hidden like a cricket in the tall grass
He chirps, "All paths lead downward from
my hill."

Fearing refusal he comes to ask a favor—
"Let us now wipe the slate clean
i am tired of keeping the score."

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 14.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Finger Tracings 3

Gifts, gifts, gifts—for the holiday
It is gifts they are giving;
Many are making a poor show of their
emptiness.

As I wait for the trolley
Two adolescent youths pass,
Shouting their lately acquired obscenities
Vulgarly in the shadows of midnight street.
While repeating her name I remember
Dropping white pebbles in a calm pool
To make it smile.

Little squirrel, one
Unhesitating moment of joy
Along my roof-tree.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 16.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Finger Tracings 4

Her hands
Nailed to poverty cross
For me.

In gypsy music,
Laughter and tears being wed
For night and the stars.

Soldier, her heart hears
Rain weeping, the wind sobbing
In the brief grasses.

Harsh lights touch with rose
Yellow mists of memory;
My tears become pearls.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 18.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Pulse Beats I

It was raining;
The cuckoo did not sing
In my native village
The spring I was born.

Early my eyes found wonder—
My heart saw change—
Sweet and bitter was Life
Upon my lips.

In a far place only the cold,complaining sea.
Imake myself happy remembering the sunny
 doorway
Where my grandfather taught me love
 of the classics. . .

Lured of far temple bells
I ride a foam-petaled wave of restlessness;
Heedless of the wind in the bamboo grasses
I flutter by on the butterfly wings of song!

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 22.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Pulse Beats 2

All summer the sadness of your eyes
Followed me like a solitary voice—
In the sad coming of Autumn I could not
forget
Playfully tying your girdle as a truelover would
After that happy relation in the willow-dusk.

A son is born—like a dewdrop,
My little sister, you slip from the grass-leaf;
Falling as carelessly as my cold tears
That should have been warm and glad
with welcome.

Death is easy when giving birth to love—
But does that make exchange less bitter?

Sharing the soft blossoms of the lovers' bowl
Heedless of the morrow I cry, "No night
Nor tempest can stand in the flow of our love!"

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 24.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Pulse Beats 3

Life and Death not being subject to our will,
While I began a glad song of welcome
I knew the salt bitterness of parting's tears. . .

A cold breath has blown suddenly
In my spring! Autumn holds my heart
Though my ears are filled with the tumultuous
Flood of a life beginning—

Though tomorrow is always uncertain,
How sad the heart-flower
Faded before this day had dusked.

You have left me as a mirror broken;
Never again will I reflect
An unshadowed image.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 26.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Pulse Beats 4

Though I heard the moon speak in the
 long grasses
Of the precious pillows made of the arms
 of love—
For me no seventh night in the seventh moon.

White as a peeled almond,
Like a petal floating—
The day moon in the windy sky.

Unseen smart of tears
Has burned my eyeballs black;
O small grief—O tears!

With reluctant step
Time and the heart go dancing
To an early death.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 28.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Loose Beads I

Fruit of my youthful
Uncompromising passion,
Punish not my love.

Children parade with
Miniature thunder of drums
And distorted love.

Hate and fear mutter
Greedy; none are too young
For war and hunger.

In darkness, dreaming
The evil of money and
Organization.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 32.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Loose Beads 2

“Capitalist”—the soft hands,
Gymnastic tongue and silk
Hat—certain as death.

“Bourgeois”—petty
Hopes swollen with belief
Secure as his dream.

“Fascist”—synonym
For Judas, liar, thief and
(the unspeakable word.)

“Communist”—all men
Abolishing poverty
Become the people.

“Patriotism”—
With foolish words, little minds
Sacrifice the sun.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 34.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Loose Beads 3

Culture, being born,
Burdens the unwilling beast
With cruelty and beauty.

Cut and bruised by
The rude world thinking in coins,
I know ignorance.

My fluting is but a thread
For gods to string beads upon—
Beads of unanswered prayers.

From a long journeying
I return home—
But the flower of my youth
Will not return to the branch.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 36.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Loose Beads 4

Choked by the injustice and hardness
of the world

I renounce all bright and lovely things—
Seeing them as the lost souls
Of the toilers in filth and rags.

In the bitterness of my fears and hungers
No one in this small village recognizes me,
Though I have been known to them
Since childhood.

Oh, only treasure
This world allowed to me,
Can I be ever other than) 4
The willow weeping by the river?

Yellow leaf that dies
How lovely! And how like us,
Wind tossed to the end.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 38.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Poet's Autobiography I

Suddenly naked he was weeping along
the wall. His tears were luminous in the
early dusk, and the stones cold.

That is the way to begin a poet's biog-
raphy. Begin with awakening and tears.

He looked into the inscrutable eyes, the
Oriental eyes, the almond-shaped eyes, the
anguish-burdened eyes of Butterfly.

That is the way to begin. Here. Now.
Here where the earth and heart are frozen,
where there are no calling birds. Now in
this moment splintered from the myth of
Time, when there are no longer blossoms
to be shattered down, no sound but wind.

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 42.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

Poet's Autobiography 2

How the spirit flutters, stricken. No fear-
drumming hatred, no blood-singing rhythm.

Sluggish and silent like tears let it begin.
Perhaps it is more than symbol—or tragic?
that the fruit of love should wither from us
in a single season—be no more the promise
of hope and joy. Let the warmth of yesterday
held to the breast make the arms strong.

We starve. We become skeleton. The
rains of destruction are come. Men stand
apathetic. In the hail of steel they fall.
Without care the stars fall. The flame licks
at their flesh, but does not ignite the lux-
ury-sodden hearts.

O, I have cried out as the jacaranda flow-
ered. She loved them, the dreams of color,
the fairy horns. (hat music dreams and
flowers make. I have heard the notes of mel-
ancholy, the blue flower-trumpets dropping
in the grass. Let us remember.

Let us remember all things.

There is a poem no poet has written,

Publication. *Blades of Breath* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered leaf 44.

Textual note. The untitled short poems are retained in their original page-group order; stanza spaces separate the individual pieces.

BRIGHT SINGING HOUR

The 1942 Wagon & Star collection

Element of Earth

Sleep brooding heavy across the earth,
And the night is like a monolithic figure,
Dark, like an Indian bowed with patience and poverty.
Night waits: quiet with stars that fade to awakening.
The Americas have no tongue to speak the silence
That only endures as a pregnancy in time.
Golden arrows of song will assail the blood,
As blood heralds the day with anguished cries.
The splendor of sun burns ineffably at the heart-core.
Blood and dawn are spread like a stain over the
 brooding mountain
That has no thought of dawn or sunset, knowing
Nothing smaller than the rolling rhythm of
 the earth.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 10.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Nightscape

Strangely this hill heaves upward, hanging like a foreshadowing of doom,
heavy against the stars;
the trees huddle along its crest
like aborigines against the night—
the ghosts of a century
above the bright neon-village streets,
unreal, brittle, shattered by the intensity
that would destroy,
but for the strange, restraining,
rhythmic chant of one cricket
keeping time.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. II.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Star Corner

Unseen, the wind along the dusking street
Is drinking up the day's monotony;
With harsh, dull roaring, ageless fretting beat
Like surf, the traffic-herd self-consciously,
On noisy, heavy feet, seeks bus and car,
The waiting train, the latest news and comics,
With hope the homeward trip will not seem far,
Nor plague the mind with wishful economics.
As hasting tide relents, the left-behind
Returns to idleness, the newsboys halt
Their raucous shout of war and hate, to find
Some rest and peace. O lonely star, assault
The memory: set Sara Teasdale's song
Of "Barter" ringing like a mellow gong.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 12.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Sea Rock

MMORTAL thunder, breaking surf at night
With steady, heaving beat along the mind,
Waele the dreaming heart's emotioned fright.
Unhappy? One may, fumbling, seek the kind, '
Loose dust that stays the eagerness of mouth
That speaks and sings through wine-besotted lips,
Of holy thought, that briefly stops the drouth
Engendered of desire in anguished sips.
But what to fear, if bathing in the sea,
We touch the shores of continents outlined
Upon the globe in cosmic poetry?
With all subtractions and additions done,
Who keeps our doubting thought and feeling twined?
No answer save the universal, ONE.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 13.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

“I, Being Mortal”

Remembering the weighty hours are few,
 Make fast your faith unto a flaming star,
Oh, truly spoken this: “All dreams are true,
While racing Time across the shadow har.”
Let joy and grief be swift, unfettered birds
Against the flower-crested wave of night;
Give to the mind all bright, undying words
That heart has need of on its falcon flight.
No magic, singing syllable of sound,
Can hope to match in music, feathered thought,
Whose whirring wings above this greening mound
Of earth are heard. Is beauty ever caught
In snare of words? Deceive me not with breath.
I, being mortal, dream defeat of death.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 14.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Lost

Eternal swing the sea and restless gulls
Awaiting time unmarked by tide or moon;
To catch one lingering and hopeful rune
The sharpest ear must die for miracles.
Beyond this wave of fear, the barnacles
No doubt are clinging fast, we importune
The awesome whole (with whom they do commune)
While lifting prayer, empty tear annuls.
What was the word that eager breaker spoke
As rolling came its hungry voice along
The dusking peace? Is hope thus lost, denied?
Let all the lost and beautiful evoke
The gods to once repeat that jet of song;
Desire must find an answer: Who has cried?

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 15.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Untethered

This night the surf is pounding loudly-sure;
Along the windy beach it reaches hands
Unseen, to grasp the flotsam thrown to cure
Beneath the brown and eager sun that glands
Respond to; sun that whitens helpless drift,
And makes dull bronze the hopeful, sickly man,
Whom dark has sent so wearily to lift
His burden-body on its cot, and ban
From mind the reaching, retching, weedy moil,
The salty care that makes him like a child.
In nightmare fleshly salvation begun
Seeks meaning, faith to justify its toil
Beyond the ken of ordinary wild
Conjecture: falconwise assaults the Sun!

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 16.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Fair Evening of Portentous Delight

O FALCON love, your golden talons are
The word—the slender moon above the hill
That stoops upon the evening for the kill—
Your eyes hold challenge like an early star.
What certain hope for those who travel far
In space, on stone, in light, through dark? They still
Lift spirit, body, mind with blinded will
And breast desire; unreckoned cares that bar

Their flight. To lose this need, she swells with Time;
He dreams a dream no mortal sleep may know,
Because his flesh is fed, his mind beguiled
By Atlantean fear, that awful mime
Of transient, egocentric vertigo,
Which fathers in atonic worlds a child.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 17.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

Baffling Tower of Dread Intellect

Beneath that tower, nightingales astound
The dark and pour anointing song to waste
Upon the stranger's head; he goes in haste
Through chantry courtyard where his thought is
In loud monotony of praiseful sound (drowned
That halts his pilgrim heart. What terrors paced
In silent cell will quiet doubts more chaste
Than hope which laves with faith his stony ground?
This vulgar pleasure is an earthy song
And shadows insufficient grasp of death;
His marble plaything "problem": questing mind,
The bitter branch retains its fruit too long,
Restore to Deity the ancient breath;
Restore to Destiny what you enshrined.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 18.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Silver Bough

In early autumn, music's gentle thrall
Is golden through the memory of trees
That knew the spring and fledgling's eager call
Against the bud-green wonder of young leaves.
Now sharply, passionate out-crying leaps
Into remembering the sculptured mime
Of leaning faun against the wind of Time
That has forgotten Eros where he sleeps.
For love no cruel thing surrendering,
In labyrinthian carnality
Is fed, like Minotaur, the brain's defeat,
Unknown of silver bough now tendering
The fruit of yearning immortality,
Law-giving Minos once conceived in Crete.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 19.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Beauty Is That Strange

Yes, beauty is that strange, that we must trace
To find beside us on the pillow shared
Your presence here; the heart-shape of your face
Halts all vague thought of loveliness, for bared
On secret-keeping brow and soft still mouth
Is sorrowing tranquillity, akin
To dark unmoving bayou, dreaming south,
This song, magnolias, girls in crinoline.
How can I ask more than pure poetry:
When this round moment inhumanly survives
Revolving time, the moonlight's whirling moil;
Here lies the towered stone, the foaming tree
In change, revealing less than your closed eyes
Where tempered beauty throbs in earthy coil.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 20.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

When Will He Know

Unlike his brother animals, on earth
Man seeks a future hinging on the past,
Against his hopes and fears he weighs the worth
His faulty consciousness may have at last.
One bright, unsteady moment in the sun
He flaunts his doubtful questions, petty cares,
Involving knowledge, faith, displaying none;
Unable to appraise his gift, despairs.
Behind what folded crevice in his brain
Lurks this belief in immortality
To come? Is not this grotesque pantomime
A shadow acting to an old refrain?
When will he know that life's reality
Is this eternal moment free of time?

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 21.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

No Word Yet Found

I CAST my net of need into the brimming sky
To snare the silver pigeons making
 transient sound
For eye alone; on brightly weaving winds, that sweep
The heart along the distant fringe of outer world,
They ride to strengthen wings that hungry fancy
 hurled
Through endless moil of this uncomprehended deep
Of flaming sun and flowing void. No word yet found
May halt this questing flight (on which we must rely)
Nor pattern it to sound.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 22.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

Landscape with Figures

Where are the golden horns that gladdened
yesterday?
Their notes re-echo down the leaning hill of fears
To challenge proud relentless agony and pains
That stupid heroes know, and soldiers meeting death;
No horn of Roland blown for them: they fight
for breath;
Their hearts are droning down like stricken
aeroplanes.
They claim no tribute in this city; only tears
And futile words will mark with honor their decay:
These nihilistic fears.

Publication. *Bright Singing Hour* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 23.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

MANY A FRAGILE THING

The expanded Silver Bough collection, 1942

Here I Would Write

With pen, both sharp and quick,
For myself in the coming night
When I shall not be a wick. . .
A spark . . . a flame . . .
Nor ash—only a thought
Taking flight on the wings of a name,
Like a soft but articulate moth,
Haunting twilight . . .

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), unnumbered opening leaf.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Nameless

There is something that harkens
Back in me to singing
On a single string; that darkens
Memory sure clinging,
And laughter bringing you near to me.
Past, present, future and destiny:
Days heavy, indolent and pleasant,
Fall away like empty dreaming.
There is something that harkens
Back in me to singing
On a single string.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 1.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Not Lightly

Not lightly put aside:
the hand's warm clasp—
the heart's delighted leap—
Time moving, ponderous or fast;
the coming down of solitude and sleep.

These truly are allied,
as dark to dark—
or light to light—
brief, brief, brief, brief,
yet, like unforgotten childish grief,
Not lightly put aside.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 1.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Moment Intangible

Strange how I used to walk these dark streets alone
and think—odd, sharp-cornered thoughts,
the mystery-breaking thoughts of fifteen or maybe
sixteen.

Thoughts of girls . . . of things
I had once done that made me sad.
“Dark is a friend . . . sometimes,” he said.
We walked together asking no more than peace
of this hour that left us together.
He spoke of the bird he had stoned,
the lump in his throat, how he choked when it died . . .
unbeautiful dead . . . A dog he had for rabbit hunting;
a greyhound by boyish whim called, “Glorious”.

Later we sat on the curb in silence.
The olive trees laid a fine fretwork of shadow on his face.
There was something frail and unreal between us.
Both regretted the unreality of a world that topples
to death. 4

I wonder how close our thought, our feeling and our
hope lay?
I would have liked to have touched him,
held him close, close, for the warmth of nearness,
so he might know it was not so bad that a world could die.
. . . “So long, see you tomorrow!”
“Yes, Adios—hasta luego!”

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 2.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Song for a Young Poet

Music of words
falling, falling,
down the chaos of a broken world—

Your voice a flute, your singing strong;
O, Sharp and hopeful, dreamed-of thing,
This alchemy of phantom spring,
Which parallels your youth and song!

Music like birds,
calling, calling,
beauty flowering the branch and curled

Along the mind in foaming sound,
Which surely must confuse the stoic
Who finds belief much less echoic
Among the leaves, upon the ground.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 3.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Old Man: Alone in the Sun

I hear the old, sure melody of death;
the chartreuse singing down the hill
of summer burnt and going—
it is not good
yet...
what man can bear to die without longing for
his child?
His child, however strange—not understandable—
full of disappointment, tears, the ends of dreams;
and mighty, like a giant on the earth...

The year he was born—
spring came headlong, sprawling down the valley—
reaching eagerly, wildly leaping—
the aspens ceased shivering by the cold lake,
became gold-green with sticky buds
quivering with morning light
and sharp with hope.
Softly, softly, softly, summer and summer and summer
impatient for the singing hush to be over—
impatient for the golden pouring of wheat—

Son, you are lost to strange dreaming
that worships something singing in afternoon heat:
something not mind—
more potent than mind—
something walking swiftly in the morning—
making a spell of new desires,
a new singing of earth...

I am alone—
the harvest stubble of my blind years mocks me—
only the truly old hear this ancient melody—
this singing of death
that is eternally urging the earth to spring...
... in separation...

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 4.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

The Druid Dream

Washed in the white of the moon,
 mad with it—
 chanting madness against the tide and sea,
 she moves—the blue woman with the seven deep
 stars in her hair,
 the wind in her eyes,
 crying sweetly along the white curving shingle
 of the world edge;
 washed in the white of the moon,
 mad with it,
 moving with less grace and crying more sadly than
 a gull
 dancing the rhythm of sunken desire;
 lost beyond worship,
 making a spell against memory, love, and the
 adventuring prow of all discoverers,
 cursing all going,
 all drowning of green and red stars
 in the sea. . .
 naked, white, as of the moon
 consumed in the flame of jealous impotency,
 mad with it—
 blue-dusk woman, as pregnant with hate as a
 sharp wisp of new moon;
 the wind in her eyes,
 seven stars in her hair,
 washed in the white of the moon,
 dead on the beach at the lift of the tide,
 mad with it. . .

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 5.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Clair De Lune

Quivering—
young budding heart—
radiance of sound. . .
O netting of time!
O mesh of light!

Softly, splendid spell,
I drown in your languishment,
swell this moment's passionate sense—
Softly . . .
Tenderly . . .
Love is my heart,
Leap less wildly, gazelle,
no sensitive blue of spring is fresher than my spirit.
There is no seductive, slow and falling star—
Only the night-mocker sings. . .
Only a bird upward flings
a smile half-seen—
Softly, brilliant, delicate mystery:
your beauty, pale-faced against the serene night,
For I taste you warm and clear, delicious of breath.
Come near, come nearer,
Drench my fever in your mountain-cool spirit—

Flower-frail . . .
Bird-strong . . .
Empowered of dream,
April, sharp, pale, green.
Bird-strong . . .
Flower-frail . . .

O ardent flesh—
less passionately,
less passionately . . .
Bird of slender-shadowed tree,
upward fling
a smile
half-seen.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), pp. 6–7.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Amulet

In a native bazaar, in a distant place
A man among many talked
And the world spun,
A poetic, simple thing—
The speaker was forgotten;
 A tall man,
The body, lean and brown,
The sweet herbs and the disheveled hair.

The red desert had lips;
Here was soul of sand and stars.
I was invaded with silence—quiet.

Then from the brown loin cloth
He drew forth an amulet
Of love and courage
As, simply, I convey to you
A gesture of friendship.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 7.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Hyacinth Weather

(For Eleanor)

Wind
Gentle breathing from the south—
Hyacinth weather!
Blue, white, puffy and fluffy,
Cloud-horses at tether,
Hyacinth weather!

South wind coaxing the rain
With sweet kisses on the mouth—
The columbine uncurls warily.
The daffodils are up. . . up. . .
Four buds on the hyacinth—
Easter two days away!

No crystal world
Scintillant with rainbow spangles,
No unreal, cold, ice-showering day
Can equal in miracle
This blue sky, this high sky,
The promises that cry in hyacinth.

O summer, soon
The low slopes of May:
Sweet beyond memory or dream
' The motionless air heavy with locust blossoming,
Beyond the blue lupine fields.

Hyacinth weather:
High sky, wide sky,
Blue, puffy, white, fluffy,
Cloud-horses at tether.
Wind from the south,
Kisses on the mouth—
Hyacinth weather!

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 8.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Like an Echo of Music

Like an echo of music many times removed,
I saw you walking on Market Street,
In the wild, golden tangle of your hair our
yesterdays—

Another time, another country, another city,
Dead to dream but not to memory.

Every hour since, I have been remembering
How slender and boy-like you were in riding
breeches;

How small your booted feet;
How white, smooth and lovely is the body of you,
Forever real, alive, sweet and beautiful.

But, despite the ache, the longing, the desire—
I would not live again those other days when we were
As morning to evening,
As sun to moon, as wind to ocean.

For I have not forgotten the red star darkly weeping
Over the highest mountain. . .

Nor my shadow above the soft, swelling curve
of your breasts—

There is no cadence can move my feet again
in that dance.

This passion is only for memory: I saw you
Like an echo of music many times removed.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 9.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Bird of Paradise Flower

Inseparable from quick sorrow,
unnamable, untranslatable,
with beauty of mere being,
 blue-needle bill,
 the orange wings—
 O strange bird-flower:
you are not imagined,
you do not betray,
you are a true poem
existing without a word!

You are rare,
you are exceptional,
a thing of beauty,
a thing of wonder,
strong in color and instinct,
a luxury to the brain—and useless.

Beyond any human fever uselessly you survive
the bird-belled forest temple,
the cold mountain's stone,
the abstract towers of man's faith and statistics.
Yours is the strength of being—O wondrous
 and momentary—
through you, I, too, am living,
fragile—wedded to tranquillity.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 10.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

May Magnolias

Tenderly on the altar of dusk
Magnolias lift their creamy flames—
O beauty of eyes opened to still stars!
O wonder of love dreaming in worship!
O mystery that my breath whispers of you!
Magnolias on the dark green altar
Strangely lovely with sadness,
With vague sweetness, promising completion!
O magnolias bring to my heart's song
The depth of blossoming perfection.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. II.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Two Friends

I have asters in a blue vase
For my two friends:
Deep dark red ones
For my old friend;
And the splendor of yellow ones
For the new friend
He is to bring.

I wonder what he will be like,
This new friend?
I would know
If I knew the flower secret . . .
Of the red ones . . .
Of the yellow ones.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 11.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Streamlined

Involuntarily they salute us,
The train—feeding the monster of Time
A dream with their hands.

Laborers pause at their work,
lift a lazy hand remembering
a gypsy dream always young. . .

At the edge of an unnamable town
an old woman lifts a tired hand,
setting a wishful clock. . .

Between the low adobe houses of the railroad workers
run two small boys and their dog;
eagerly they race the other world
as yet too swift for them. . .

An old farmer, with his sons,
rests on his hoe,
unmoving as the hot and dirty-green field,
while his boys make hitchhikers' thumbs
at the Twentieth Century. . .

Leisurely a sun-watcher rouses himself,
as the train pauses for a station yellow
as the harvested hills;
he sets the hands of a dollar watch. . .

A young woman in faded gingham waves from a
kitchen screen door,
a hand gaily hopeful of tomorrow,
assured, by our passing, of the reality of
dreams . . .

Involuntarily,
they salute us—
the going world—
feeding us bright dreams
with their hands.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), pp. 12–13.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Plantation Evening: Deep South

Sweet figs. . .

tart apples . . .

bright birds flying,

and birds singing . . .

Love, looking with dark eyes.

Moss and willow, gracefully fingering the water,

moving darkly, slowly as time .

Elementals amid fading memory—

Yesterday:

 Magnolias and roses;

 bronze gates and grilled iron fences,

 with the simple purity of Ionic columns.

A star—

drops against the evening

as a phallic magnolia bud bursts to bloom

in a shattering of pollen

—Like a thought quickly released,

but quieter.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 13.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Carlsbad: the Caverns

Downward
into the mind of the earth.
exploring the convolutions of the dark mind,
the lost legend, the terror tales, the darkening
dreams
of before man—

The long processional, akin to pilgrimage in a sick world;
hardly worshipful, these modern savages: gum-chewing
imitators of barnyard fowl and sheep; of the equally
loud burro,
who shows more sense, being unhurried, patient and
sure-footed.
What portent for them that the earth listens with
great stone ears
to music lying dead beyond thunder?

Beauty is moulded eternal in earth's tortured brain—
Stone flows like water, lies like snow;
stone scintillant as starfrost makes dreams of cities;
stone like birds known or unknown, alive with the
gargoyle spirit.

The enchanter Merlin, and all his vast array of sleeping
princesses, kings and queens, giants and dwarfs.

A forest of magic pine trees laden with snow—
the same snow that lies discolored with spring thaw
about the feet of dark Titans, who, in this inner earth,
are chained in crystal.

In the drapery of the quietest hall, the sword of
Damocles hangs unmoving

I wonder how many sensed fate so near and the flight
of the carrion birds?

By the most sacred green pool are four nuns
who once were queens; they sing an unbelievable story
of red-walled cities; a strange river along which
they stood

with men in gold and silver, who were proud and lovers.
Of their blue and green knights and many servingmen—

forgotten songs and wars and huntings.

This story is a lost note blown from a golden-throated horn.

No one listens but the white falcons, who also are stone.

A ranger tells of the summer flight of the bats—

These pilgrims like that story; with the end of day

they, too, will lift through the bright mouth of this world

and circle outward, hunting the twilight.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), pp. 14–15.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Monotone

(Patterned on a Down-Rain Night)

Rain sings a dirge, forlorn, foreknown,
Along the eaves, down every gutterway;
Bleak towers lean to catch the blown
Release of tears, lost barely yesterday.
Wind, rain, with whom else do you share
This gurgling grief, wet-whispering of dread?
Lone tree all shivering and bare,
The bed-warm old, chill dawn's unshriven dead,

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 15.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Of That Vigil Strange

Vigil strange I kept on the
field one night.— Whitman.

Unbelievable .

They say, “Thomas Wolfe is dead!”

But I tell you:

He came out of the pomegranate-cleft
twilight of the gods;
Out of the dark music-mountain
naked to the night of earth;
Came, a Titan . . .
Breaking all chains with the spirit
of his powered word!

And I tell you:

Mourn not that from speechless remembering
he has ended the vigil on Time-field;
Hold close upon the heart this flame,
his incommunicable, splendid eloquence;
Honor the mystery. . .
The bright blade cutting star-doors
in Life's stone-thick rind!

Unforgettable . . .

The fruit; the mind; the spirit; and the word!

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 16.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

At the Grave of Lawrence

(Kiowa Ranch, N. M.)

Remembrance stops before the brooding passion here,
Upon this sun-washed slope is final meaning
Of all blood-gashed pilgrimage (we cannot weep).
Oh, so short a time prepared, the spirit launched
Sunward, faring by tides on star-periled seas.
Much wearied, dust, worried from grave to shrine-grave,
Knowing how little memory has served:
To hold in check the curio-minded sham and show.

The cruel phoenix, fabulous and awkward as hope,
Squats upon fattened thighs amid the renewing flames.
Lawrence, what answer to our fears or beliefs lives
 in the blue sky?
What message may we read in the sun-faces of dandelions
That fill the mountain meadow under the summer rain?
Do you know, on the far fruited river, the place now,
 the stature of man?
May he yet seek far down the senses, feel as you
Dawn-washed promise in a waking flower?

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 17.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Star Corner

For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost.
Sara Teasdale in “Barter”.

Unseen, the wind along the dusking street
Is drinking up the day's monotony;
With harsh, dull roaring, ageless fretting beat
Like surf, the traffic-herd self-consciously,
On noisy, heavy feet, seeks bus and car,
The waiting train, the latest news and comics,
With hope the homeward trip will not seem far,
Nor plague the mind with wishful economics.

As hasting tide relents, the left-behind
Returns to idleness, the newsboys halt
Their raucous shout of war and hate, to find
Some rest and peace. O lonely star, assault
The memory: set Sara Teasdale's song
Of “Barter” ringing like a mellow gong.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 18.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

San Francisco

O dove-grey city
by the western sea;
O seven-hill city
of the sun-bright streets—

Imperishable enigma
with the phoenix spirit—
you who are continually discovered,
lost and refound,
what secret against Time
is hidden in the upward thrust of builded stone?

O much-loved city
of transient delight;
O sure-dying city
by hunger made dear—

Though you may be strong,
strong with frail breath—
death is sure on the lifting shore,
on the west-curling petal of earth—
Is there one can name this thing
shriveling the heart; making cold stone bleed?

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 19.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

“I, Being Mortal”

Remembering the weighty hours are few,
Make fast your faith to any flaming star.
Oh, truly spoken this: “All dreams are true,
While racing Time across the shadow bar.”
Let joy and grief be swift, unfettered birds
Against the flower-crested wave of night;
Give to the mind all bright, undying words
That heart has need of on its falcon flight.

No magic, singing syllable of sound
Can hope to match in music, feathered thought,
Whose whirring wings above this greening mound
Of earth are heard. Is beauty ever caught
In snare of words? Deceive me not with breath.
I, being mortal, dream defeat of death.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 20.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Beauty Is That Strange

Yes, beauty is that strange, that we must trace
To find beside us on the pillow shared
Your presence here; the heart-shape of your face
Halts all vague thought of loveliness, for bared
On secret-keeping brow and soft still mouth
Is sorrowing tranquillity, akin
To dark unmoving bayou, dreaming south,
This song, magnolias, girls in crinoline.

How can I ask more than pure poetry:
When this round moment inhumanly survives
Revolving time, the moonlight's whirling moil;
Here lies the towered stone, the foaming tree
In change, revealing less than your closed eyes
Where tempered beauty throbs in earthy coil.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 21.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

When Will He Know

Unlike his brother animals, on earth
Man seeks a future hinging on the past,
Against his hopes and fears he weighs the worth
His faulty consciousness may have at last.
One bright, unsteady moment in the sun
He flaunts his doubtful questions, petty cares,
Involving knowledge, faith, displaying none;
Unable to appraise his gift, despairs.

Behind what folded crevice in his brain
Lurks this belief in immortality
To come? Is not this grotesque pantomime
A shadow acting to an old refrain?
When will he know that life's reality
Is this eternal moment free of time?

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 22.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Element of Earth

Sleep
Broods heavily across the earth,
And the night is like a monolithic figure,
Dark—like an Indian
Bowed with the patient waiting of poverty.
Night is quiet with stars that fade to an awakening.

The Americas have no tongue which speaks,
Yet, silence endures only as a pregnancy in time.
Golden arrows of song are assailing the blood;
The blood that heralds day with anguished cries.
Day comes with the yellow sun burning ineffably at
 its heart-core;
Dawn is spread like a stain over the brooding
 mountain
That has no thought of dawn or sunset,
Knowing nothing smaller than the rolling rhythm
 of the earth.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 23.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Laughter of the Dark

There was great thunder on the earth,
and the tide of undiminishing strife
rolled with the deep red laughter of the dark!

Laughter—holding no stars;
no soft murmur of wind and wave.

Laughter—with no whisper of an earth-loving
foot;
no swift wind-loving spirit.

But laughter full of the throaty growl
of the driven wheel, the unresting hand:
laughter—darkly deep as the belief of hell.

Laughter—hysterical with its rebellion,
weighed in a mingling of sweat and tear;
laughter—empty-eyed, bland and staring,
full with salt.

Laughter that had forgotten the sun;
the wild-sweet vigor of air;
laughter of grime and smoke,
appalling the shaken ground.
Subterranean laughter turned inward
on the sunken dream,
with nothing but its first red wrath in thundering
monotone,
droning triumph that is rotten with death.

Laughter—sharp in the triumphant death
that claims now the mute tradition of a printed
page!

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), pp. 24–25.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Nightscape

Strangely this hill heaves upward,
hanging like a foreshadowing of doom,
heavy against the stars;
the trees huddle along its crest
like aborigines against the night—
the ghosts of a century,
above the bright neon-village streets,
unreal, brittle, shattered by the intensity
that would destroy,
but for the strange, restraining,
rhythmic chant of one cricket
keeping time.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 25.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

The Unrusting Blade

(*Spring, 1941*)

Immortal . . .
Beyond Time (man's slow destroying myth),
The supple wind-turned blade
At the throat of this year.

Ever ready sword of resharpened hope,
Let your green edge
Whittle away our greener fear.

This season's change
Is cutting through the quick of life—
Eternity mantles all
The rain-drenched hills.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 26.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

October Skyline

In that dark hour
When I understood not what I knew,
Street lamps, like candle-bearing neophytes,
Climbed the hard street,
Turning up the hill, a procession ecclesiastical,
To where, along the earth rim,
Far lights made a scale of golden music,
Like the beginning of a hymn.

Unheeding,
The sprawling city slept.
WHAT OF THE FREEMEN?

There is no dream so unquickened by the dust
As death—the gradual slow decay
That lives in mediocrity of words
Which voice despair, the loss of faith.

In all this vast America,
Where blooms the multi-patterned flower.
The glorious passion of trust and hope?

... where?
Watered of bitterest tears,
Flame of spilled blood,
This mad and crying voice
Thunders the blind rage of fear,
Seeing all beauty transient in the flesh,
Forgetting this is the core of rot
The waters of the earth may not cleanse.

Some tremble and welcome Caesar,
Others hail him in the shambled streets—

What of the freemen
With the realist eyes?
The undaunted hearts?

Those who have pillowed on stone
And anointed the pillar to sanctify their dream?

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), pp. 26–27.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

To Shake the World

We dream the foibles of the sculptured town,
—the veined tumult dead—the street, silent and echoless,
beneath the rain—corroded mound
of steel and stone, plaster
that runs to flower-root, the broken glass.

How is
that morning hour fled—
which found the sword-edged belief
Spiraling—
winging the shafted stone
—the glitter-mad, indestructible, weatherproofed steel
cutting in scallops the unhemmed sky. . .

Acid-fire eats the brain, the betrayed flesh
of builder and dreamer,
the wormy belly:
of avaricious desire—there is silence
startling as a tongued stone
dragging the new rooted grass upward with a word—
The future like a spent arrow twisting down, down. . .
It takes less or more than ten days to shake a world.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 28.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Letter of This Season

I shall not forget the rains of this spring
even though soldiers kill me
and I lie in the seeded and luminous grass—
I shall remember.

The dark song of sky-scanning waters
Tilts the weighty season.
Along the hills the billowing clouds
die their beautiful death
that is heavy-laden with life.
Earth is washed with the greening rain;
brief in a thousand springs
the hopeful and eternal Rose—
And I am repelled through the evil umbra
of the mighty.

If death overtake me,
let my blood fountain from the shadowed cone
to nourish the fibrous root;
to dye the bright blossom—
Corpuscular flowers will spring again
from the ancient and lusting heritage
of the youthful battle-dead.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 29.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Remembering Babel

(A Chant for the Tower That Crumbles)

In the dread moment
(Whether we fiddle, or we play at words)
the questions and answers merge;
the merged question and answer flows
bringing neither light nor dark—

Out of our salty fear, our earthy mood;
out of our vague twilight of feeling,
or our lack of life,
what seed may germinate?
what dusty flower grow?

There is no basalt face to hurl a flaming word—
no portent or design
made of tea leaves—
dripping sands—
straggling numbers—

stars, with or without tails;
no hieroglyphic snakes—
no chanted rune—
no moulting prophecy
to make our need resolve into a hopeful ache.

If the flower rise from the dust
let its stem be brittle

(like our laughter);
let its petals be pale

(like our feelings);
let it thirst for water
(we have no tears).

A momentary breath, let it pass lighter than wind
(swifter than light);
let its existence be like a herald of dawn—
ae or nothing—

Then will it reflect us in the cold mirror'
of consciousness;
place us as a diffused glow

on the ruddy surface of time.

Let it be us buried below the black sub-soil,
under the hidden purpose,
with our sun hunger;
let it be glacially preserved in memory
where there is no tomorrow.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), pp. 30–31.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Summer: 1941

In the suburbs
There is a strange Autumn come
Upon the parkway tree.

The winds make a gusty equinox
Along the gutters—
In the debris.

Though spring become summer,
Summer again on meadow and hill,
Something is singing the dirge for cities . . .

How can the heart
Be calm or peaceful
or still?

There is a new fear we breathe:
A mechanized, a levered, a wheeled—
A clogged decay.

Phoenix of wonder,
Ruff your fabulous splendor;
Renew the feathered myth of life in death—

Rise whole and beautiful
Out of the smoke and flame,
The destructive midget thunder:

Tear this cataclysmic womb
Asunder—
Be born again!

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 32.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Landscape with Figures

(Dionol)

Where are the golden horns that gladdened yesterday?
Their notes re-echo down the leaning hill of fears
To challenge proud relentless agony and pains
That stupid heroes know, and soldiers meeting death.
No horn of Roland blown for them: they fight for breath;
Their hearts are droning down like stricken aeroplanes.
They claim no tribute in this city; only tears
And futile words will mark with honor their decay:
These nihilistic fears.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 33.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

No Word Yet Found

(Dionol)

I cast my net of need into the brimming sky
To snare the silver pigeons making transient sound
For eye alone; on brightly weaving winds, that sweep
The heart along the distant fringe of outer world,
They ride to strengthen wings that hungry fancy hurled
Through endless moil of this uncomprehended deep
Of flaming sun and flowing void. No word yet found
May halt this questing flight (on which we must rely)
Nor pattern it to sound.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 33.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Seasonal

Intense blue patches of sky
Looking through the broken storm. . .
The aspens tremble in the still air,
The flame of death is on them.
Leaves, like yellowed hearts,
Make a ragged pattern as they fall. . .
The year has come to naught.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 34.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Lost

Eternal swing the sea and restless gulls
Awaiting time unmarked by tide or moon;
To catch one lingering and hopeful rune
The sharpest ear must die for miracles.
Beyond this wave of fear, the barnacles
No doubt are clinging fast, and importune
The awesome whole (with whom they do commune)
While lifting prayer that empty tear annuls.

What was the word that eager breaker spoke
As rolling came its hungry voice along
The dusking peace? Is hope thus lost, denied?
Let all the lost and beautiful evoke
The gods to once repeat that jet of song:
Desire must find an answer: Who has cried?

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 34.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Silver Bough

In early autumn, music's gentle thrall
Is golden through the memory of trees
That knew the spring and fledgling's eager call
 Against the bud-green wonder of young leaves.
 Now sharply, passionate outcrying leaps
 Into remembering the sculptured mime
 Of leaning faun against the wind of Time
That has forgotten Eros where he sleeps.

For love no cruel thing surrendering,
In labyrinthian carnality
Is fed, like Minotaur, the brain's defeat,
Unknown of silver bough now tendering
The fruit of yearning immortality,
 Law-giving Minos once conceived in Crete.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 35.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Beneath Tall Trees

My heart goes trembling—
Transcending
 the grief
 of leaf
Descending,
pulling earthward
 this arched and aching sky,
where death is shadow-mirrored
to still the heart's outcry.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 35.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Of Heritage

When ancient ancestor of mine
Led spear-charge on the wounded plain,
He cut from flesh without design
The skeleton of pain.

Now I, in darker mood, take time
To measure that historic frame:
The record glorifies the crime
To hide heroic shame.

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 36.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

Transmutation

On bright and windless air
Lies the wreath of my despair—
O day-moon symbol, be
Talisman of prophecy
And wash with sea my altar stone.

Speak, prophetic moan,
The word and break the seal;
Come with power to reveal.
Rise with anger, quench this flame
And write with stars your name!

Publication. *Many a Fragile Thing* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star, 1942), p. 37.

Textual note. Reset from fresh page-level OCR and checked against the local source scan; obvious ornaments, folios, and recognition debris are omitted.

LISTEN, NO ECHO

The complete numbered sequence, 1–54; visual poems omitted from this reading edition

I

Listen. . . listen. . .
the Voice is speaking
speaking clearly
in your kingdom of silences . . .
Life is twisting our hearts
in hon'y fingers which illusion
has trailed in ages of dust,
our flight outwings the sun
and we have guessed what no ear
shall ever hear, though angel and dove
rest on our erected pillar . . .
no single ghost but ghostly MAN
spaceward lost
Truth eye-active on mirror of water;
the Ugly, False, Indecent
brood with terrible meaning,
O awful insolence,
listen . . . LISTEN

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 1.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

2

Bony finger writing in fire
on toppling walls of wind
spelling out the hated message
the eternal revolution of love—

I believe it all:

the sacrifice the blood
men sinful and sinning
(a little lower than the angels)
plotting bitter time
with unspeakable deeds
treason and treachery
in the kingdom of the heart.

Worship dull luxuries gimmicks and gadgets
record your frustrate history with perverted
zeal

dot your eyes in the destruction of life.

Whoring and drunken
believe in miracles
stagger against the stars
demand from lust
the treasure-trove of love—

What?

You would finger the bright coins
(time-minted by longing)
for the stamping of truth in the image of a dove
discover them minus time's beveled motto
IN GOD WE TRUST

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 2.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

3

Starving and frozen
amber eye of time:
bitter and futile loneliness
all the idols are fallen
with no stone left to fall—
frigid waves of hell
are last mind-island
of our wrath-cremated age.
By sterile stability pursued
above the bottomless abyss
eye searches self-accusing darkness
down narrow crevice of its discontent
with divinity a hushed whisper
behind bony armor
of the skull's dark all.

His holy agony reversed
atom hurls the curse of death
against the stars.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 3.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

4

Sing heaven with the epicene joy
of the angel who miraculously appears
on unbelievable spaces of air:
brave trinity of brothers
earth is mad wonderful pleasant
(and hell has its miseries
lacking the luxury of tears)
—in these strange indirections
we would apprehend each other.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 4.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

5

Wingless
neither ape nor masochistic angel
though he claims kinship with the one
and mimics the other
man is tale-burdened with
a bright hoped-for state of grace
sluicing off static tongue
his thirst of desires—
nowhere hearing silence gnawing
on his worm-marowed doom.

Dare God reveal himself
in this bone-white smile?

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 5.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

6

O the withered years
burnt brittle on the sky-branches
of the dark tree of time!

Shaman, magus, priest, all dust
lost wonder forever subdued
in gargoyle stones and templed groves;
and in the laboratories
in the phallic fingers of stone, steel, glass
the glad fanatics of earth's perverted nerve centers
chant a new ritual
in the flat voice of measurable fact
hymning their exultation to the intended victims
making marginal notations on existence—

Death democratic, we vaporize cities,
no longer young men fighting:
the new dead are children, women, old men.

Playing the exploiting game
madness has its own ends
and will destroy the tall nations of man.

O pious madmen before the altar of power
playing sleight of hand with your cyclotron!
O serene martyrs
you worship the horrible death
burning in your bowels like a quenchless sun!
What obscene terror of flesh-mutilating desire
would you midwife into the final hush?

Better the normal hunger of love
in the violet evening of cruel labor
than this tiger cursing the dark
with orange-gold eyes of destruction
—man in his harsh heart hating himself
with incandescent brilliance.

Voices of the unknown beckon?
What voices? Whose? Where?
Voices?

I hear voices also:
the blood insistent and terrible
the voice of the rocks
the unchained violence of the seas
the healing green of the world
the placid and undefeated beasts
the raucous protesting birds—
earth's is the moody anger of the lately raped
for he is not man's whore
but living yet

The memory-drunken sun
drinks shadows out of the eyesockets
of bleached skulls and cratered cities
and waits waits—

ONCE ONLY THE SKULL-CRUSHING AXE

NOW THE WINGED AND LEPEROUS FIRE

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 6.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

7

It is no world dead
 we labor to deliver
 to gods commanded dead—
 revealed again and again
 in strange disorder
 giants demons monsters
 in seeming end I blinding the eyes:
 that transparent boundary
 shall be the torment of our children;
 for storm-blunted misdirection
 heads our frustration
 speaking the tongues of madness—
 WE BEGIN BY EXPLAINING WHAT CANNOT BE
 UNDERSTOOD

Planetarium priests, in your modern kiva
 God has become a grotesque of orrery posturing
 FEASIBLE BUT FANTASTIC
 there shall be eyes of mirror no horizons
 we may scorch the earth make dead a sea
 we shall know the lair of the winds
 rule the oceans of invisible light

O remember this with other factors like syn-
 thetic pain rare beefsteak that cape of ermine
 Twist the silk cord
 for TIME equals MONEY
 hang on the ropes on a direct line of sight
 U & I and the test tube savior
 may yet rotate without relay
 anywhere

Everything (including the commercials)
 is resolved in fifteen minutes
 In the most improbable way

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 7.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

8

faces faces faces STARE
at them—they are real
THEY ARE TOO REAL
not monsters of fear
and not dreaming . . .

Host of darkness on die chalk sky
without eyes the bodiless faces
stretch to perceive that blinding splendor
in the brilliant wall of your tomorrow
and they are smashed tall in black anger
when the cloud-pricking temples of the present madness
waver and topple skyward
and nothing falls.

Once they chattered in many tongues
in limbo of current illusions . . .
but it was all lies.
They listen now, listen lost in blankness:
masks drawing into space
through the funnel of multiple white ears
the blue spiral of time.
They know—
KNOW that the film is running backwards
against the sound track
and will stall on the actual moment
of nothingness.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 8.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

9

..We sisters are, no longing sets one free.n that day the men of madness
knowing no god false nor gods true
fell upon hunger's moon-edged blade
fell even as the mighty had fallen

for in their red pavilion love and hate
were equal captives and remained unmated
not being body-naked
more to be feared
for skull-lance upward
from empty eye socket to empty eye socket
made ghostly ghost of tender trouble
in their toothless brains

last enchanted citadel
the past sometimes present
(but seldom or never pleasant)
and drawing near and nearer the final sun
pearled on the palm of apocryphal tomorrows

in barren loneliness they tethered
stallions of limitless love
luring the leopard of immortal hate.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 9.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

10

... and beheld a bloody angel
on the fire-furred air of noon.
Gulfed in horror heard
white-tongued skull-bells
saw jewel-eyed serpent
fallen on the solid dark of boundless space;
flowering in low-pitched thunder
there appeared a waste of hones:
suddenly recalled with chilling strangeness
the familiar terror
and though a voice spoke
THE WORD was like fugitive meaning
in shadow anguish-wakened
by a dream of rocket-bursting stars.

In my hands were gathered all seasons—
the fruit, herbs and flowers—
and I returned them to the sky-templed altar of earth
and wept:
“Mother. Mother, I am lost—
lost...”

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 10.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

II

Horizon-wheel of the eye
 we are gods in the image of gods
 breathing seasons of fabulous color
 trackless-going in our sun-flowing land
 taller than love in luminous lowers
 of dark rootless towns:
 all the domes are of crystal
 the turrets gold and the pavements onyx

—mine the castle hilled there
 seed-silent in undreamed deep of possession
 for living flame is guard at the postern gates
 none have passed but the blue naked wind
 who washes in spring,
 the pomegranate wind
 turning summer leaves on silver,
 the clear orange breath of autumn
 burning earth red,
 and (most welcome) the black wind of winter
 hidden in a blue-white wish
 howling my name.

Only these have seen that all the windows
 are looking glass—revealing nothing—
 for they, like myself, have no fear of dying!

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence II.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

I2

O sky wings wings
the dream-washed eye looks
through the palm of knowing!

Cipher of eternity
your history is a mouth of lies
glitter-winged spawn
of dark-mirror conceits
life-dust forms devoured
by thoughtless seasons
a stone-cored necrology
of star-ghosted blood.

For your children
perhaps sea-lost monsters
or the wind-blown end

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 12.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

13

Wholly unknown and invisible
 the star-gear'd clock
 that ticks once in a century
 has a pigment-thin black face
 and unseen hands that point nowhere.
 But it is possible
 that someday, someone, somewhere
 will put his nickel in the right slot
 and by will or chance place
 the sixth little ball through the right arch,
 down center groove to trip the hammer
 and the whole gadget will light up
 to the ringing of bells in a neon glare.
 And through a curtain of expiring stars
 will appear as if by magic
 the cloud-leafed tree hung with angels
 and with deafening splendor
 it will disintegrate upon the
 wholly unknown and invisible boundary of space.
 to dissolve this crimson glory
 the archangel napping on the other side
 of heaven's windowpane
 will blast forth a shower of gilded cupids
 (in his last minute haste
 forgetting they were stored there)
 and his sour note shall sound with judgement
 for a thousand years.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 13.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

14

Dead—so terribly dead
in warren run of habitual distress
feeling no shame no pain
pride leveled
 neither master nor slave.

Armored in fear
flesh rocket-ambient to lost purpose
bird hovering on steel wing
pack howling the night
cobra kissing the day.

Star-greedy worm
with bug-enormous eyes
staring from a loose sack of bones
remember somewhere an abstract hand
has already turned the mirror sunward across space

—for you
only the wished-for death
perceived in a soundless flash.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 14.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

15

In the stone-jade eyes of home
the longing of drowned glory
god-deep in white wounded seas.
O coral-boned motherland
whelmed in your cleverness
sealed turbulence is only
sleep-seeming . . . mind's barbarous horizon
overflowing again in emerald splendor
the blood tide whispers at us
but it is better we fear nothing
beyond the ear's serpent warning—
bow hateful that cadaver of ghosts
rightruling in the twisting tunnel of death.
Would those who pretend to read bleak past
and illustrious future find
nothing written of time's meanest worm...

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 15.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

16

Lost tongue in river of eyes
ever horizonward without sound
swift over under tumult of sun
(pulsing flame-flung cipher
husked in heart-dark pole to pole)
man's hope beyond hieroglyphic real or airy—
in our city of accustomed despair
cell-resting query devoured of breath
unfathomed of angry archangels
noisy seraphim or passionless wish
our star-paved street become
alleyway pitching on chaos
sky-rim west of our furthest longing.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 16.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

I7

Any man
 be he not a liar
 (to himself or others
 or perhaps to both)
 has seen you O goddess
 consuming white Sanity
 and her brother Madness.

Give Death into our hands, mother
 let his white hound and the black bitch
 turn upon him that our fears may be no more
 and time end.

We would chew on the eternity of Death
 crunching, O slowly, his wax skeleton
 melting his sugar skull under windless tongues.
 Let death no longer. be the dawn
 nor your own face be orange with anger
 in the autumn evening. . .

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 17.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

18

White night,
white night without sleep
wrestling god-spectral abstraction
upon the margin of blind hesitation and act,
reason is ever midwife of doubt:
not tricks hot truth weighs
against breath-feathered sail,
along wind-narrow wave crest
heart flame quenched in swirl of darkness;
miracle of terrors
west of the oldest sail-monster
mother; sister, bride—blue-eyed Miriam,
star of the sea—
not secret-found last perishing fire,
image-practiced likeness!

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 18.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

19

Ah! . . . born many times from the hurtling waves,
he of the gilded horns, man-headed fury
in the hour of die twin-rising sun
voyage and voyager in miracle
foam-templed guardian of landfall
nourished by doves of his virgin mother
felled by red arrows of his father
deluge-floating the cradle-ark
king-shepherding the stars—

All has been told of him time before
in circle of she-hawks the eye's mighty omen
the sea in boundless anguish, no dove yet—
on the thin roof of the heart
only jeweled thunder of rain
wrath-cold fear-fallen scattered and driven
mirror of tears.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 19.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

20

You who are horn with leaves in spring's green whisper
and on the shore rock have knowledge of moon-sail and tide depth;
it is no secret that in the darkest mirror
your lace conjures an effulgent sun—

by power of golden branch and bells
rouse from sleep, for your hundred hands
are tangled in the mane of the Green Lion;
you shall be suckled of star-milk, trample desire,
hope on the mercy of red whips.

She who finds wisdom with the wind-winged serpent
mothers the star of the morning
loves the star of the evening
And eats from its nest in the ashes
the scarlet egg of time;
she of the equating passions (life or death)
finding the obsidian mirror
sole gateway and light-struck revealer
dream-imaged final judge.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 20.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

21

Her willow weeps in the waters,
 (on the mirror-door Self's red face
 orbs times illusory night)
 the curved blade severs the apple
 revealing star-blossom
 and spotted spiral of wisdom
 feathered in winds.

O blue-robed mother
 with your circlet of pearls
 leaf-tongued fruitage
 of flower-crested waves,
 our tilted feather of sail
 bellied with breath
 finds ever this island anchorage. . .

Thy spirit birds
 (spume-born wind ghosted covey of quail)
 over the dusky dunes moon-whitened
 and salt-quickenened palms
 lean close whispering mysteries
 deeper than fingering tides
 or horizon sea rim of stars.

Time's three-made-nine
 turns on the hub of the north
 (behind the winds) the silver wheel
 and lets through the eyes of space
 the striding hunter and his jewel-eyed dog
 whose retrieving fangs froth the drowning wave.

Ah dark breasts thunder-cleft
 the dolphin rushing the river mouth
 meets the downpouring river of milk.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 21.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

22

In green deluge of knowing leaf-hidden
finding the curse of dream-flowing dark
and alien strangeness in
peach-blown orchard of light.

Who cast us forth with leaf-tongued sibilant whisper
to build our cairn of star-hurled stones
on the field of his night?
Bitter loss our nude radiance
and galled by wonder-building labor
we launch our barbed hungers
as our fathers their arrows
which whispered through the heart of life.

O water-tongued mother,
the long feet of our possession wander-fed
and our hands future-shaping the seas
source of our far-remembering river:
we will to break forever
the water-envelope of love
in the shy-season of our most terrible need.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 22.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

23

Serpent-singing sun in the loins
lotus-rooted eat eye of dark
ever-returning river whisper
your pain-edged delight-given wisdom
through the labyrinth channels of sleep;
not coiled in the brain
we await last wounding escape:
small hollow heart-sound
white-blooded death is a moon
horizon-curved in a lemon-scented dusk
and we long to smash time in the face
with a star-burning fist.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 23.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

24

O fall with me
through the dark webbed floor
between the red lips
ride depth-drawn breath down
miss becoming a word—
deny hollow-toothed desire
for serpent-word
turned head to tail
burns out the rarest air!
Natant on nacarat dusk of heart's abyss
loose star shroud and fear no burning
beyond pain-lost time
become space-unicorn
hub night's dream-blue wheel
on center of forever.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 24.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

25

The rain-pregnant wind
wrapped in her salt shroud of meaning
moves landward with darkness,
on the proud forehead her star-burning need
in her hands the sea-sounding shells
of moon-sweetened sadness
slumber-deep in memory of longing.

O hard-driven god of the day
subtle inward compulsion of love
yields from leaf-shadowed hand
fugitive seed of your longing.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 25.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

26

We have our fable
O tongues
but the dark rootless tower
cloud-anchored
dissolves
each brick
(shadow of a bird)
sluices to silence
for time is dead
in the outrunning of sound;
the mine and yours
(and not yours)
the here, there
(or not there).

O so long to find the way
the obvious no-gate of horizon-wall time:
the conceptual chamber (nude-bright splendor)
thin sheath of FIRE turned inside out.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 26.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

27

Emerging ever from womb-door darkness
 we sing, no other sing than you
 green coffined years—
 hand-weighed sun-handled
 wing-shield-circle (you know pity
 you are merciless) bind, double-crowned
 father, active serpent—
 in your not-sleep torpid night
 and the belly glass of dream.

Name-cried sorrow
 the waning moon of spring
 pass. . . slip. . . flow. . .
 many-rayed hands dark-shining
 green-shadowed silence.
 Your violence
 lies drunken purple on snow,
 leaps in the whiteness of some flowers
 to break heart against heart!
 To the wind's pulse the sea whispers
 whispers again . . .

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 27.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

28

Surging of star and sea
sure stone solemnity
red monks cowed in green
their line-thin desire
laureled in mistletoe.
Pale pink flower-pattern seen
circle comprehended whole
noiselessly

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 28.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

29

O it is moonrise, Love,
and the seals flowing silver
heave themselves up the black shore rocks.
They are not mocked by a trackless thought
launching a thousand ships against
the burnished towers of death;
tethered to a silver stick like a dead fish
floating bellyupward in wind
passion and white-fanged enchantment
roil the turbulent South of their ripe dream
—blue between blue—and this garden
is violence and violets
eaten by spiders of light.

The shore-tempting moon
is insistent with haste
but the seals, Love,
hark such weary knowledge
of what lies in the depth
of dark waters drowned.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 29.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

30

Love is the ark upon the waters
not seasonal nor accounted in hours
not bound by the leopard sun
to horizons east nor west
nor to the rise of the moon's slow tides
which fall into darkness
and out of darkness again.
Swollen by rapture and mad release
star-shaken tremor of green wind
moves in the sail-blown billow of summer
the mellow exultant sadness
—finds, the slow white sleep.

Love is the ark upon the waters
blindwilled dove gives meaning to the world
ark to water water to ark.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 30.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

31

Song shall not break my life
 nor love know the madness
 which shatters the world and darkens the sun—
 O moon wan captive
 pale ever in the hand of Death
 great lover.

Had I known I would not have wished
 the ringing of a little bell
 I could not have waited
 nor longed to embrace the widest and wildest sky.
 Yon have been life to me—my grief you are
 link forever with the heartless, subtle and cruel:
 you are not forgotten in the still blue heart
 of change and no solace will lie down beside
 my body's weariness—
 for surely you will find me there in rain
 and I shall continue to feed your terrible blind root
 which ever and forever hurls a green javelin
 al the enormous sky.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 31.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

32

Petal-agony and spring's flower-memory
belled against time—
first-love veining the heart-sick night
enchanted island of space
furthest star is alien to your sky
quiet terror eye-welled in the soul's being
where iron tongues melt in the throat
of eloquent bells

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 32.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

33

Impossible to think
 to reach through the face
 beyond the round skull-hill
 over the cleft cliff of the chin
 in—
 divided by the breath's sharp ridge
 your green eyes
 have been silvered by life
 wind has become whirlwind
 in hollow-cheek-night
 but there is peace
 somewhere stillness
 calming as a tear
 —they tell me you are dead
 who are so cruel.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 33.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

34

Afternoon's long sun proclaims the need of haste
—furtively feeding the pink-legged birds
with frightened eyes the adolescent lovers
devour the lost hour of that uncertain day.

To the corner of the plaza
pigeons follow wind-paved thought
and rest upon historic corrigenda
of petrified event—
ah, monument-of-heart no child will name
no future flesh recall.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 34.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

35

Hill, at this hour
you are the prow of earth
cutting a wake in the stars
as earth turns eastward
toward midnight.

What thought on frail wings
assails dark watchful eternity?
Here in green gloom of cedar and fir
darkness defeated by the first snow
solitude destroyed by feathered silence
night subdued and air brightened
by slow-falling whiteness.

I shall go home an unmarked way;
in window of night
an earth-loving star giving guidance
—the simple assurance of light.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 35.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

36

Sea falcon
riding the breathless air of Malibu
spreading afternoon terror down
slope-quiet of puma-color hills,
no anger, fear, nor agony
are your moving concern
—on vaulted spaces of time
hunting more freely than you
dark passions, tortured nerve ends,
mind phantoms of dread.

Your faultless feather-sail upbeats
with indomitable purpose
unhooded needle eye;
sky-curving force an instant suspended motionless
stoops on fear-froze meadow mice
in the sun-yellow grass.
Not hate, not tearing of flesh, not love of death
but hunger's talon-piercing will,
grim (perhaps) but cleanly red.

Only an arrogant weakness
would ascribe to you man's blood lust
—and torment conscious of pain.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 36.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

37

Thinking often of the sad little comedian
 of my childhood matinee
 (in that freedom before Sunday school)
 sharing his not-quite-grasped dignity and glory
 with a troupe of apes.

All meaning lost in the circle streets
 of Brentwood (delightful suburb)
 where was no thing not making
 self-answer for future's madman
 (rumored to live in a beer cellar
 and not grown too tall to strut).

Was it man or monster
 who in the twilight wood sea-haunted
 indulged a delirium of impotent hopes
 while eye-nuzzling
 with inflamed scarlet-rimmed rabbit lust
 the soft wine-perfumed and hated breasts of France?

You say, a monster?
 Legend says: a man
 (followed by fiends, guided by stars)
 who drank no hemlock and bathed in blood
 became invisible within
 the sulphur yellow of an August cloud.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 37.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

38

We all have a goal
star in the window
and have assisted time
to heap corpses in the windrows
of history—
 Hasten final lover
 blunt-nosed worm twist
 once into the shape of God!
 Lean a more than 6x4 shadow
 black against the sun.
O we may write plainly but small
on the tablets of dreaming
for to us was reserved both
the seeming and the meaning.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 38.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

39

Only God is taller
 than Death's bastard, time.
 O protector of maleness
 clothed in sun,
 this knowing drives the ravening tide
 landward . . . lures the lemming seaward
 glimmers with the grunion
 at tideline . . .
 out of the very night of riot
 strange disorder of monsters, demons,
 inbred predictions stabled in fancy
 groomed by giants.

The petty but pompous powers
 heads of state, generals and the other privileged
 order their puppets pry open
 the door to extinction. . .
 curiously confounding fact
 with what magic made famous. . .
 the great rock is tottering quaking
 unforgettable this clutter of dead bodies.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 39.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

40

A spider finds it very hard to look like a tea leaf
even though he sticks to the bottom of the cup.
No matter how much sugar is there
even a strainer won't make him see life
through a steel haze of duty.
And people who own teacups
won't keep spiders in them indefinitely.
Impossible! IMPOSSIBLE!

A spider finds it very hard to look like a tea leaf.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 40.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

41

How delicate (how romantic)
 to gnaw defiantly on the oppressors'
 rifle butts
 while they smash your surly face
 in the grit of the holy arena.
 Such gore and meaningful action
 are of fatal appeal.

Be he ever so smug and safe
 our little hero adorned
 with wings like a smirking cupid
 had better pray, brothers, before he stumbles
 over his own or someone else's secret.

The exalted Queen
 of his dirty pleasures
 in cluttered bedroom
 or at the Moderne Motel
 twists his soft dreams
 in her cruel hands—
 ah, host of bewildered angels
 can love be mangled
 and not killed?
 In justice, eternity may be death.
 Slurking in and out of life
 it is well to remember this.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 41.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

42

Nude bonanza of roof high figures
multiplied to nothingness without mirrors,
a gossip-wind at the ear of the stranger:
She's my dearest friend—but not Venus!
Green weed-poison, unsaid meaning
drowns hairy ape, night club jungle,
in leaf-cut pools of envy and bate
(but she has escaped).

Hairy ape (husband not mate)
swung in void of self-abuse
inward turns beyond rose-rimmed Eden,
lost, impossible lust
leaving dull frozen sword
welded in stone. "Good-bye."
Good-bye and remember us.
Have a good trip home!

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 42.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

43

With bawdy boasting
Henry, Kenneth, and even Jack
would make us believe
their hearts are drunk
—being satiate of lust (and bored or boring
with their charming intimacies)
going among acres of dark pointed breasts
(offered to such god for amusing
experiments in current pornography).

Hank, Ken, and sometime John
make an awful clamor
to convince us with violent
but airy eruptions
that they are the world's most
jaded sots and that there is nothing
worthwhile or more rotten than sex.
Feigning madness, they admit to hairy thighs
stinky fingers and an amazing number of
name invented or resurrected,
while holding the truly curious
at careful arm's length.

Metaphorically speaking if you have never looked
you have never found
 and any of this trinity
will buy you a beer and no foolishness about it
For they know
 what holy grails
hearts are!

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 43.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

44

OCCULT "DR."

Fat unmentionable, wallowing walrus, transient snail-soul,
gray marginal-wolf twilight haunted
self-create monster: wino dream bottle
stretched glass belly, misshapen memory
terror beautiful with serpent-twisted
meaning jewel-eyed adolescent accent
cabalistic syllable
lipping

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 44.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

45

DEAR MOTHER

One feather at a time from the live goose
doe-eyed cannibal leaf-whisper cloudvoice
nongenerative repulsive hot-blooded dream
roll in arctic pleasure sea
vicious white-whale-ego
iceberg submerged
with equal meaning

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 45.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

46

PALE LOVER

Albino outline neonglow
on burnt-out ashbank breath
disintegrated word-scattered
in life's whore-listening ear
lost shepherd of lust's
bastard hour limp downward
—dawn flows skyward
only tomorrow

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 46.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

47

WHELP

Nausea-whirled light-driven
paralytic breath-maddened flesh
thunder-stunning knowledge
knife-heart envying
diamond-point stars etching
on darkness—
future-rest miter-angled to hate's
cross-marked fang-clean sacrifice.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 47.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

48

Harry bawls
for his in other lost
in her sky-high tomb
lying within city's finger-
palace of stone glass.

Harry scrawls
gutter-wise (mistakes happen) and
an empty task balloons
bellyside down-smog
with Honest John,

Harry eggs
his sagging ego on-
and-off quick as a habit:
Why don't more people hide
in the park on Sunday morning?

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 48.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

49

Yes, withdraw your spirit
from the world snail-like
no doubt you can perform
in a dome of shell
other feats of magic
as great as changing
your sex at will.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 49.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

50

Cease crying, "Doom! Doom!"
beam eye beyond horizon of FIRE.
Ah, heart—deep chalice—
the thin red walls tube outward
are space time one tongue
(and the whole richness in consummate desire).
No boundaries, no season of place
the corrupt centers melted from island and plain
fire-washed seaward—
again harbors of peace tide-clean:
only joyous commerce
elemental play of sun, wind
the cleansing drive landward of rain
sky-tilted waters singing down-earth
cycled meaning of all change.

In not having we possess
BEING all places—not one
—and forever.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 50.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

51

O inward-peering eye
 what gods I have seen!—
 has it made you blind
 streetcrying life out of dry hone?

Command tendril root, leaf-handed vine
 love-sheltered nourished of spittle-moistened dirt
 star-restore rock-flesh
 to wheel of little planets burning:
 on passionate sun-shield strike dumb forever
 blood-sea and fury-sound.

No brittle flower spoken savior wills
 to find refuge in wind-haunted hill-hollow
 of naked evening greenglobing pale-light oneness.

Fallen loneliness blade-severs
 day-night bright air meaning
 above wisdom over sound.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 51.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

52

Atom moon
new dimensional mirror
cast outward
and the earth core
peeled like an orange—
O fire-splendored
no thing dies
(change within change).
Weighting the husk
the generational need—
ever the wide-winged
seed.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 52.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

53

Walk miracle on waters
place a sure foot on emerald edge
of wrath's empurpled wave.

Though you strike through me
on swift wings
I shall not know destruction
nor drink of your fatal brightness
fallen as lightning
through the depths of the sky.
O I would name your name
spoken in delta of womb-darkness
and suffer my parts to be scattered
for the searching—
restored walk the naked meadow of water
washed clean of illusion
by radiant winds.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 53.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

54

Day-of-coming-forth
dawn over the sky-rim with a shout
an archangel's voice trumpet-sounding
Not for the dead, O the living . . .
elephant-glimmer of blue dusk melts soundless
terrible tiger smiles through the grasses
sun-heart awakes from its secret eternity
—the thousand centuries a stone put away.

Knower-of-Many-Being-One
rush wings through the exiles of heaven
(we drown in the rose sea we are with power
and danger) tongue this luminous path
with sure-moving feet.

Publication. *Listen, No Echo* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1949), numbered sequence 54.

Textual note. Reset from the numbered sequence only. Independent typographic constructions and advertisement overprints are preserved in the companion facsimile edition but omitted here.

THE SILVER BOUGH AND OTHER SONNETS

Fifteen sonnets from the 1950 hand-set edition

The Silver Bough

I early autumn, music's gentle thrall
Is golden through the memory of trees
That knew the spring and fledgling's eager call
Against the bud-green wonder of young leaves;
And sharply, passionate outcrying leaps
Into remembering the sculptured mime
Where leaning fauns deny the wind of Time
That has forgotten Eros where he sleeps.

For love, both time and thought surrendering,
In labyrinthian carnality
Is fed, like Minotaur, the heart's deceit,
Unknown to apple bough now tendering
The silver fruit of immortality
Lawgiving Minos once conceived in Crete.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 1.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

The White Goddess

Your falcon, Love, is golden avatar:
A slender blade of moon above the hill,
That stoops upon the evening for the kill,
With eyes like taloned fire of night's first star.
Await her sure return from realms that are
Beyond your strangest dream which tethers still
The silver flight that bells the hawker's will;
With her, desire to climb both high and far.
Though lure will bring her to the blinding hood,
She is the mistress of the world you know:
White goddess of the night, the field, the wood,
Controls the wind and tide, the menstrual flow—
Is mother of your evil and your good
Since time's own seed in her does swell and grow.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 2.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

Beauty Is That Strange

Yes, beauty is that strange, that we must trace
To find beside us on the pillow shared
Your presence here; yet, heart shape of your face
Halts all vague thought of loveliness, for bared
On secret-keeping brow and soft still mouth
Ts sorrowing tranquillity, akin
To dark unmoving bayou, dreaming south,
This song, magnolias, girls in crinoline.

How can IJ ask more than pure poetry,
When this round moment transiently survives
Revolving time, the moonlight's whirling moil?
Here lies the towered stone, the foaming tree
In change, revealing less than your closed eyes
Where tempered beauty throbs in earthy coil.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 3.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

Thicket of Delight

Let Pan not still his pipes till you are mine:
No lesser god points way to Paradise,
T'mpassioned fauns are leaping in your eyes,
Come tread from purple grapes their crimson wine.
None doubt that men are mortal, gods divine,
When vulgar minds with leaf-like hand disguise
What greenest finger seeks till passion dies
Beneath the dream-blue shadow of the vine.

When unicorn parts thicket of delight
To are the splendor of some future year,
Along the star-white margin of our night
Pan plays his madness to the mortal ear—
Sends milky stallion plunging out of sight
In burst of music only we may hear.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 4.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

Question Ultima

When nakedness is clothed in honeyed fire
And shocks awake her hushed virginity,
Reluctant serpent shakes his timeless tree
To bride the heart's betraying mystery.
Our raging blood and dying time aspire
Beyond the curving dream of angel choir;
Between the apple thighs with rose desire
I enter moondoor of eternity.

Though bed be green, this act we punctuate
With hope and fear; as witness to its powers
The shaping city dreams of phallic towers.
Beneath the blind and sensual finger's weight
Will waggish time approve or desiccate
Forbidden fruit, our serpent-coiling hours?

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 5.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

No Amulet

Remember how the springtime moon that
 hung
On breathless silence, bird-like in its plight,
Enchanted slim reluctant hour of fright
And left us heart to heart forever young?
Oh, being wordless, love has never sung
As I would sing the glories of that night
Which saw us wed like lilacs with moonlight
When lovely touch revealed love's native tongue.

The sweetest words of love are only speech,
An alphabet for lust and swift regret,
That ever seek, but find no counterpart;
To words alone the heart is out of reach,
Their violet guile can wear no amulet
Of heart-shaped leaf. . . for leaf-shaped heart.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 6.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

But, Love...

I care not for the mind's naive delight
In sweet unrest of moon-enchanted dove.
That crumbling stone and drunken bird tonight
Will rise in loneliness and soar above
Awakened earth, and we shall eat on dust
Of serpent's curse! But, Love, return my love,
For I would sunder moons by sharp blade-thrust
And pluck again, again, with hot despair
Of bone and blood, the rootless flower. Trust
The healing pain that reaches everywhere
In white white ecstasy of early spring:
When plum and dogwood climb the windy air,
Let heart from hunger's pinnacle take wing
In sacrament of snowy blossoming!

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 7.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

This Is the Hour

is the hour to pluck the wilted reed
From winter sleep, for god of darkness quakes
With springtime fire, and restless heart awakes
The unicorn who knows the body's need.
Let virgin tame him in the flowered mead:
His frightful self control as pain partakes
Of crimson dreams beside the mirror-lakes
Where joy is windy hand to womb-sown seed.
O flushed with laughter, in this holy rite
Lay claim upon aroused eternity—
With phoenix die, to rise from flaming nest
Of love—be sun in final cave of night
And in her golden flower a drunken bee;
Then lay your head upon her heart—and rest.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 8.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

The Sisters

We sisters are, no longing sets one free.
My rage at perished bloom makes me confess
The winds of spring too gently shook my tree
And flowered sterile grace, not loveliness.
Let autumn fruit complete the melody
That summer sang, for winter stars may bless
The barren womb. What vision did you see
Not seen by me? The body's holiness.

No season left for splendid lust nor fears.
We boast a triumph tasting of defeat
And reap cold pleasure from the carnal years.
Betrayed by will and webbed in dull deceit
We wait our Lord... Can death tell us apart?
He is much wiser than the serpent heart.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 9.

Textual note. Text checked line by line against the local source scan.

For My Son

Though this frenetic age is moving faster,
We are betrayed, my son; the will to act
Is lost in stratosphere of thinning fact,
But contemplate no functional disaster!
For eyeballs frozen by a view much vaster
See television-press affirm with tact
The credulous and schizophrenic pact
That Man has made with his amoral master.

Be not so simple as to draw in breath;
Expel no poisons from your blood; O walk
Ghoul quiet round the huge impounded "Yes"
Of spotted news; with future-damning talk
Conceal the proper shock; and wish no less,
Nor more, than total war and total death!

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 10.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

Of Fortune, Life and Time

Though ignorant as fortune, life and time,
With angels I continue to converse
Since devils, always properly perverse,
Assert that wit and knowledge are no crime.
To twist like ampersands the thought and rhyme
Destroys the truth and love that make a verse,
And I reject those “editors” whose terse
Invective is an effort less sublime.

Their fevered prose declares that chief concern
In life is sex, and time delights in death
And fortune hangs upon an empty “When?”.
And now we know; and in this world we burn,
And ticker tapes are pulsing with our breath,
And God is sex, and they are sexless men.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet II.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

The Alka-Seltzer Love Affair

They sat at lunch and saw their “friendship”
end:

She thought how strange that always in his house
She'd known the killing hunger of the mouse
That haunts bare cupboards; he who did offend
Her now had used her passions well to bend
Her will to his, the stinking barroom souse . . .
She longed to slash the dirty, lustful louse
With painted nails once ready to defend
His smallest whim.

 The lecherous old goat
With vacuous gaze caressed her with a smile,
Revealed he knew her heart as she knew his;
A rush of sweetness gurgled from her throat. . .
He gave her answer with an equal guile
And dropped the tablet: listened to it fizz.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 12.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

For an Archaeological Future

Black laughter from the mouth of bloody war
shall mock us ever, beating down with thunder
dreams our forebears gave to time: the wonder
told by maverick sun and meteor. . .

No praise nor thought for Egypt's crumbling score
of speaking stones: old monuments of plunder
lost from proud Atlantis buried under
towers swaying on the salty floor. . .

When drowned cathedrals waver in our eyes
we bell new depth of madness out of pain
who dread no evil Atom-man has done.
Tn shell of loneliness dull fear revives
as plunging stars like tears of golden rain
reveal satanic will to split the sun.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 13.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

Mission Completed

For Joe

Though we knew the lowly ass served Thee,
In childhood village he was quick to make
R joke on it and said, 'No load will break
The back that bore the cross up Calvary.'
He knew so little then of agony;
And though the pine tree weep and aspen quake,
Boy heart is seldom shaken for your sake—
May doubt that God would die upon a tree.

Not boy, not man, he went to romp with death:
The game was ruled by epitaph and prayer,
The score went home with censored photomail.
With all mankind in trust, his shibboleth
Was peace: he sleeps among the crosses where
His faith was crimson wine for thirsty grail.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 14.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

I, Being Mortal

Remembering the weighty hours are few,
Acclaim with faith the flaming solar star;
For truly spoken this: Our dreams are true,
And these decaying time shall never mar.
Let joy and grief be swift unfettered birds
Against the flower-crested wave of night;
Give to the mind all bright, undying words
That heart has need of on its falcon flight,

No magic, singing syllable of sound
Can match the music of a feathered thought
Whose whirring wings above this greening mound
Of earth are heard. Is beauty ever caught
In snare of words? Deceive me not, my breath!
I, being mortal, dream defeat of death.

Publication. *The Silver Bough and Other Sonnets* (West Los Angeles: Wagon & Star Press, 1950), sonnet 15.

Textual note. Reset from the hand-set first edition; ornamental type and decorative marginal matter are not reproduced.

PERIODICAL AND LATER POEMS

A political newspaper poem, work from Dion, the Bashō version, and other later witnesses

Nostalgic Chorus for Mixed Voices

Banish all those long, long years,
Memories of dark acts washed in tears;
Too long we have suffered shouted facts
That laud falsely or point out lacks.

Chorus:

O give us Hoover back again,
Good ol' Hoover and bathtub gin,
Sound money and our freedom too,
With no eagles sick or blue!

Theme songs are a childish thing!
Hungry and tired I cannot rise to sing
Parodies of either Republicans or Democrats
Who bellow of wrongs and rights of mice and cats.

Chorus: (Repeat as above, only much louder)

Party lines crossed of parties ran
Repeat no idle lies of a Congressman
Whose sincerity is beyond reproach
Like that of any lean cockroach.

Chorus: (Repeated with whiskey voices joining in)

Publication. *West Los Angeles Independent*, August 28, 1936, p. 8.

Textual note. The surviving clipping continues with a staged political coda; this reset retains the lyric and chorus sequence legible in the located witness.

Genesis of Love

Let golden sun to silver moon recite
The ritual meaning made of long pursuit,
And dream as deep as darkness stir the root
That lucent blossoms orbit into flight.

Rejoice! for angels choir purloined delight
Not dull with time, nor held of poor repute,
Though our old Adam, tasting of the fruit,
Has clothed himself in leaves of silent fright.

When spirit sings the body eloquent
To launch exploring rocket into space,
We shoal upon the stars, are rolled and tossed
Beyond the blind horizons of intent;
That truth which aureoles your blissful face,
Blue heaven gained is not green Eden lost.

Publication. *Dion*, no. 1 (Inglewood: Wagon & Star Publishers, 1963), p. 9.

The Morning-Glory

Has climbed the center picket
Of the garden gate.

Publication. *Dion*, no. 1 (1963), p. 26.

Sweet Rose of Cimarron

Did I know ‘em? Are you kiddin’, stranger?
Rose knowed ‘em all—rustler or Ranger!
Bail was a problem them days for a Lady
That some said lived a might bit shady.
Sit down. It rests your feet—Joe, a beer.
How’d you find me? Oh—and he sent you out here,
Well—guess you know then, the Injin Nations,
Outlaws, gamblers, my shirt-tail relations,
They call me Sweet Rose of Cimarron—
I was young them days some mourn as gone—
And green—but not for long—they larned ya fast—
But, hell, let’s drink! Who cares about the past?

Yeah, Arkansas Tom made that song about me
And that dancin’ fool from old Shawnee—
He could dance, that man, he just warn’t foolin’!
And he danced on air when he shot Jim Doolin—
Everything livin’ is knowed to change,
Men—women—cattle—the open range—
All of ‘ems gone and life’s gotten damn tame!
But, as some gent said, ‘What’s in a name?’
Goin’ now? Well, come back real soon,
You’re the best man I’ve seen in many a moon!
Come back! Come back and we’ll hang one on,
You and the sweet, Sweet Rose of Cimarron!

Publication. *Dion*, no. 1 (1963), pp. 30–31.

The Old Pond

The silent old pond
a mirror of ancient calm,
a frog-leaps-in splash.

Publication. Hiroaki Sato, ed., *One Hundred Frogs* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1983).

Textual note. O'Donnol's English version of Bashō's old-pond haiku.

COLOPHON

A reset reading edition with a separately preserved facsimile companion

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans for *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*. Prepared from the original local book and periodical scans, August 2026. Designed at six by nine inches in EB Garamond 12. The cover uses retained unlettered O'Donnol artwork with live series typography. Page-level OCR, source PDFs, and the companion facsimile remain in the poet's production and research folders so that the text and material bookworks can be studied independently.

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Dion ODonnol - Collected Poems

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