



LILLIAN AMBER HUNT

Arista and Other Poems

PERIODICAL VERSE AND THE COMPLETE 1921 COLLECTION

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

The Text-Tech Papers | Los Angeles, 2026

Lillian Amber Hunt

Arista and Other Poems

Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry

*Edited by Brian Kim Stefans
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EDITORIAL EDITION

This edition prints the complete known poetry of Lillian Amber Hunt in chronological order: the verified 1916 periodical poem followed by the whole of *Arista and Other Poems* (1921). Every text has been reread from its original scan. Stanza divisions, genuine line indents, italics, authorial notes, and book order are retained; display centering and narrow-page hanging wraps are not converted into false indentation.

Lillian Amber Hunt

1882, birthplace not yet verified – January 13, 1935, Los Angeles, California

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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Research and edition prepared 2026. Historical texts are reproduced for scholarly and educational use.

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Archival Images

Documentary witnesses to Hunt's Los Angeles career

Los Angeles, Calif.
April 5-1922.

To
The University of California.
With the compliments of
the author.
Lillian Amber Hunt.

April 1922
cerning the real writing game.
He is one who knows and does.
April 22—Mrs. Lillian Amber
Hunt, teacher, poet and dramatic
critic, will give another of her
interesting addresses. Mrs. Hunt
recently published a book of
poems entitled "Arista," and is
now teaching short-story writing
at 506 Western Mutual Life
Building under the Southwest
School of Industrial Arts.

Hunt's presentation inscription to the University of California, dated April 5, 1922, with a pasted notice identifying her as a teacher, poet, dramatic critic, lecturer, and short-story instructor.



Lillian Hunt's marker at Hollywood Forever Cemetery, recording the years 1882–1935 and identifying her as the wife of Thomas J. Hunt.

Introduction

Lillian Amber Hunt, 1882–1935

Lillian Amber Hunt survives at once vividly and incompletely: a Los Angeles poet, teacher, dramatic critic, lecturer, and instructor in short-story writing whose known work appeared between 1916 and 1921. Her lyric “The Song in My Dreams” appeared in *Out West* in 1916; five years later J. F. Rowny Press published *Arista and Other Poems*, a compact book moving from celestial allegory and the ungovernable wind to fairy dance, disappointed ambition, marriage, and the restorative force of love. Two poems were written for pupils of Maude B. Fischer and performed at Los Angeles recitals, linking Hunt’s verse to the city’s women-led club and teaching culture. This edition brings the periodical poem and the complete 1921 collection together for the first time, restores their stanza patterns and intentional inset lines from the original scans, and retains the book’s dedication and authorial performance notes.

Stage I | Early record and magazine publication, 1882–1916

Lillian Amber Hunt was born in 1882. Her birthplace and parentage have not yet been verified, and the surviving record does not establish whether Amber was a birth name, a middle name, or a professional form she adopted. Her grave marker identifies her as the wife of Thomas J. Hunt. No reliable evidence has yet been located for the date of their marriage, his occupation, or any children. What can be recovered with confidence begins in Los Angeles during the 1910s, when Hunt entered the intertwined worlds of magazines, teaching, recitals, and women’s cultural organizations that sustained much of the city’s literary activity.

Hunt’s earliest located publication is “The Song in My Dreams,” printed in the September 1916 issue of *Out West*. The magazine’s contents page calls it “The Song of My Dreams,” but the poem itself uses “in.” Its three quatrains move from songs already sung, through the failure of public music to

reproduce an inward melody, to a beloved whose devotion finally makes that private song audible. The poem's appearance in *Out West* placed Hunt within one of Southern California's longest-running literary magazines, a publication that joined regional writing to the civic and cultural program associated with Charles F. Lummis. No earlier verified poem has been found in the local journal archive.

Stage II | The Los Angeles book and public work, 1921–1922

In 1921 Hunt published *Arista and Other Poems* with the Los Angeles firm J. F. Rowny Press and dedicated the volume “To My Mother.” The title poem imagines Arista among celestial maidens tending allegorical lamps. She sees a gifted but worldly poet on a cold Earth and asks to carry Love to him, only to be told that the necessary lamp is Sacrifice. The book's spiritual vocabulary—Wisdom, vision, reincorporation into earthly law, and the constraints of Space and Time—belongs to the era's broad field of metaphysical and New Thought writing, although the available evidence does not establish Hunt's membership in any particular movement. J. F. Rowny's list included poetry alongside works on religion, psychology, and esoteric thought, making it a fitting local home for Hunt's mixture of lyric song and spiritual allegory.

The remaining poems widen the book's emotional and performative range. “The Spirit of the Wind” is a long incantatory sequence that asks to exchange Duty, Fear, Pride, Time, and Place for motion through tempest, avalanche, lowland valley, and dawn. “In a Green Old-Fashioned Garden” turns a conventional meeting with Love into a sustained narrative of the claims made by Duty, Ambition, Fame, and Wealth upon a woman's life; only after age, abandonment, and economic servitude does the speaker return to the garden. Two lighter lyrics document Hunt's connection with dance and recital culture. Her note records that pupils of Maude B. Fischer presented “The Fairy Dance” at the Ebell Club House on May 16, 1921, while “Gathering Flowers” was presented at an Easter recital on March 21. These notices show that the poems were not only printed texts but scripts for embodied performance by young women in the city's club network.

An inscribed copy of *Arista and Other Poems* preserves the clearest evidence of Hunt's professional life. On April 5, 1922, she presented the book to the University of California "with the compliments of the author." Pasted below the inscription is a dated clipping announcing another public address by "Mrs. Lillian Amber Hunt, teacher, poet and dramatic critic." The notice says that she was teaching short-story writing at 506 Western Mutual Life Building under the Southwest School of Industrial Arts. Its reference to "another" address implies an ongoing lecture presence, while the combination of criticism, creative writing, and instruction places her in a wider professional field than the small surviving poetic corpus alone would suggest.

Stage III | Final record and recovery, 1923–1935

The documented literary trail ends after 1922. Hunt died on January 13, 1935, in Los Angeles and was buried at Hollywood Forever Cemetery. Her marker gives only the years 1882–1935 and names her as Thomas J. Hunt's wife; the cemetery index supplies the exact death date. No obituary or later publication has yet been securely identified. The loss of that record makes the surviving book unusually important. Read with the 1916 magazine poem, the inscription, performance notes, and teaching notice, it reveals a writer whose brief known career joined spiritual aspiration to the practical work of criticism, lecturing, classroom instruction, and staged recital in early twentieth-century Los Angeles.

Editorial Note

Texts, lineation, and sources

The copy-text for “The Song in My Dreams” is the poem as printed on page 104 of the September 1916 *Out West*. The copy-text for the remaining poems is the author-inscribed 1921 printing of *Arista and Other Poems*. The magazine contents variant and the single emendation of an evident missing letter in “The Spirit of the Wind” are recorded after the relevant poems.

Hunt’s printed pages often center verse blocks, so short lines naturally begin farther to the right. This edition does not mistake that display centering for authorial indentation. It does preserve the recurring alternate-line insets in the lyrics, the stepped refrain in “Spirit of Light,” and the final inset line of “The Spirit of the Wind.” No indentation has been copied from an earlier reader’s PDF.

The local journal archive and current bibliographic catalogs were searched for further poetry. No additional independently verifiable poem or second collection was located. The 1921 book is therefore printed complete, with its dedication and recital notes, while periodical verse remains a separate chronological section.

Periodical Verse

Stage I | Out West, 1916

The Song in My Dreams

Many songs have I sung, songs of love and of passion,
Songs of the sea and of clear crystal streams.
But to one song I could ne'er give expression,
And that was the song I sang in my dreams.

In vast halls to great music I sat listening breathless,
That song must be sung most surely it seems.
But, never, no never, did earth's sweetest singer
Sing that song for my ears, the song in my dreams.

I met you my love, knew your heart's true devotion,
As the light of a star on a misty night gleams.
I took up the lute, struck the chords with precision,
And lo, I could sing the song in my dreams.

Publication. First published in *Out West*, vol. 44, no. 3 (September 1916), p. 104. The issue's contents page gives the variant title "The Song of My Dreams"; the title printed above the poem is used here.

Arista and Other Poems (1921)

Stage II | The complete 1921 collection

Dedication: *To My Mother*

Arista

Far up in Heaven shone a golden star.
 There, with flaming lamp in hand,
Arista stood, and, gazing down,
 She saw the stars a band
That whirled along their shining path
 For numbers as the sand.

Six lamps there were, besides the lamp
 Arista's Lamp of Love.
Five lamps there were, all trimmed and bright,
 Burning starry flames above,
By five young maidens, each as fair
 And gentle as a dove.

The names of these five burning lamps
 Were Truth (which all did prize),
While Devotion with Humility
 And Power with Beauty vies.
The other lamp, the lamp unlit,
 Was the Lamp of Sacrifice.

So long had she tended the Lamp of Love,
 So long kept up its flame,
She had become a part of Love—
 Of its heart of hearts she came,
And longed to give all of herself
 To express Love's very name.

One cold, dark star that feebly shone
 Seemed of so little worth,
Her six companion maidens spoke
 Of it in jest and mirth.
But Arista, with her Lamp of Love,
 Did care for this cold Earth.

And as she looked down to the Earth
 Her heart within did burn
To help this cold, unlighted shell;
 For this her heart did yearn,
That of its race could one be found,

One that of her could learn.

She saw a poet on the Earth
Whose songs were called sublime.
He had the poet's gift of song,
The faculty divine;
But the poet's vision was denied,
His message was but rhyme.

"He has from the vision turned aside,"
She said, her heart aflame,
"And needs at once the help of heaven
To show the way I came.
He thinks not of the song he sings,
He thinks of wealth and fame."

Said the Lord Watcher of the Skies:
"Were he the vision given,
No earthly goal of wealth or fame
Could blind that inner vision.
No power could make the poet true
E'er lose his dream of Heaven.

The Lamp of Wisdom is the source,
The light of inspiration,
To the soul that's kindled by that spark
Is the poet's vision given.
He has no need for help on Earth,
Nor would he look to Heaven."

"O grant me, Lord, the Lamp of Love,
O Watcher of the Skies,
That I may light the way on Earth
To him whose thoughts do rise."
But the Lord did gently shake his head—
"Not Love, but Sacrifice."

Said the Lord Watcher of the Skies,
Who does the Lamp of Wisdom tend,
"Know ye that he, the Lord of Life,
Has no beginning and no end.
And never does he break his laws
And never does he bend.

Remember that the Soul
Which goes back to Earth's grime,
Must put itself in earthly guise
And back to Heaven climb.
Be subject to Earth's fettering laws—
The laws of Space and Time.”

* * * * *

Then the Lord Watcher of the Skies
Who does the Lamp of Wisdom tend,
Did day by day give her his help,
Did her of his wisdom send.
And thus inspired she writes her songs
The songs by Wisdom penned.

Publication. *Arista and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: J. F. Rowny Press, 1921), pp. 5–7.

The Spirit of the Wind

Spirit of the Wind, strong and free.
Spirit of the Wind, mad and free.

Spirit of the Wind, wild and free.
Spirit of the Wind, sad and free.

Spirit of the Wind, mild and free.
Spirit of the Wind, glad and free.

Give me of thy Spirit, Wind,
As round the world ye blow;
Give me of thy power to move
Forever to and fro, to and fro.
Let me break these bonds,
These chains that keep me tied;
Whose iron links are wrought
By Duty, Fear and Pride.
Give me of thy Spirit, Wind,
Give me of thy power.

Give me of thy Spirit, Wind;
Give me of thy strength and will;
These shackles let me break;
These shackles: Time and Place.
Let me o'er creation rove,
To the uttermost bounds of space.
Let me follow the comet's path,
Let me take a place with the stars;
Let me look back on Earth,
And know that I am free,
Forever free like thee,
Forever free like thee.

Take me with thee, O Spirit of the Wind.
Take me with thee on the tempest's back,
Take me with thee on the lightning's track,
Take me with thee where storm clouds rack,
And ruin is in thy wake.
The breath of the hurricane let me breathe,
Let the whirlwind by my spiral sheathe,

As I stir the sea to the depths beneath,
Where thundering waters break.

There with thy fearful strength and power,
In cold and fog and mist and shower,
I battle with crags and cliffs that tower
O'er the deeps the waters make.
There with the thundering, thundering waves,
There with the pounding, pounding waves,
There with the booming, booming waves,
There with the waves I'll be
Strong and free, like thee,
Strong and free, like thee.
Mad and free, like thee,
Mad and free, like thee.
There let me be, O Spirit of the Wind,
There let me be,
Strong and free like thee,
Strong and free,
Mad and free like thee,
Mad and free.

Take me with thee, O Spirit of the Wind,
Take me with thee, and let me be
Wild and free, like thee,
Wild and free.
Take me to the wild mountain height,
Take me where foot of man has never been,
Take me where lie the unwarmed snows
That coldly touch on Heaven's rim.

There let me be wild and free,
Wild and free like thee.
Wild and free,
Wild and free.
There let me whirl and rage like thee,
There let me shriek and groan like thee,
Wild and free, like thee,
Wild and free.

And as I gather strength and rage,
Let me the furious battle wage,

That the earth has fought from age to age,
Till the mountains tremble in their place.
Until with scream and crash and roar
Down their granite sides I make a floor,
A path for the avalanche.
And as my fearful path I trace,
The path of the avalanche,
There let me scream and roar and crash,
There let me tear and rend and gash,
Over all let the lightnings flash,
As on that fearful path I dash,
The path of the avalanche.

And as I go with crash and roar,
And ice and snow and stones I pour
On the plain below as sand on the shore,
Wild will I scream,
Scream o'er and o'er,
In my rage I'll scream
As down I roar,
In the path of the avalanche.
Wild and free, like thee,
Wild and free,
Wild and free.

Then when my rage is filled,
Then I can rest,
In a lowland valley,
I can rest.
In a lowland valley,
I can rest.
There let me be, O Spirit of the Wind,
There let me be,
Sad and free like thee,
Sad and free,
Sad and free.

There let me be, O Spirit of the Wind,
Mild and free like thee.
Mild and free,
Mild and free.

Make me a zephyr, that I may play
With the wildflowers and honeybees there all day.
Make me to whisper low and sweet,
Make me to murmur in the brooklet's song,
Make me to croon in the mother's song,
Make me to sigh in the evening breeze,
Make me to whisper in the murmuring trees,
Make me to wander where darkness flees
From the first white shafts of dawn.
And there in the sunshine I will be
Light as the sunshine, light and free.
There with the birds all day I'll soar,
There will I whisper o'er and o'er,
The song I have learned of thee.
The song I have learned of thee.
Glad and free like thee,
Glad and free like thee.
Glad and free,
Glad and free.

Publication. *Arista and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: J. F. Rowny Press, 1921), pp. 8–11. An evident compositor's omission in "Take me with the" on p. 9 has been emended to "Take me with thee."

The Fairy Dance

Tripping lightly, tripping lightly,
 Tripping o'er the green.
In the moonlight shining brightly,
 Fairy forms are seen.

Now they hover o'er the flowers
 Like bees without a sting;
Now they seek the cool leaf bowers,
 Now they've taken wing.

Flying softly, flying softly,
 Back they come again.
Breathe thou softly, oh, so softly,
 Or they'll fly again.

Tripping lightly, tripping lightly,
 Dance the fairies on the green.
In the moonlight shining brightly,
 To mortal eyes unseen.

*Presented by the pupils of Maude B. Fischer at the Ebell Club House, May 16,
1921.*

Publication. *Arista and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: J. F. Rowny Press, 1921), p. 12.

In a Green Old-Fashioned Garden

In a green old-fashioned garden
By a high hedge walled about
With trim, well-kept borders
And prim, straight walks
Love and I one day did meet.
And there Love did come to me
With swift-flying, sandaled feet
And took my hand and led me
To the fountain cool and sweet;
And there he sat beside me
On the high-backed garden seat.
And as he bent to kiss me,
To claim me for his own,
Stern Duty came between us—
Placed her cold, white fingers on me
And there bade Love begone.

Long years I toiled for Duty,
Toiled hard for daily bread,
For a few old shabby garments,
And a roof above my head;
And though I tried to love her
She was always cold and dread.
Though I tired hard to please her,
Wore her black tight-fitting gown,
When she no more could use me
She left me all alone,
Alone with no companion
But cold Ingratitude.

I came back to the garden,
To the fountain cool and sweet,
And again Love stood beside me
By the high-backed garden seat,
And as he bent to kiss me,
To claim me as his own,
Ambition whispered in my ear
And bade Love to be gone.

And then Ambition led me
To the heights where Fame did dwell.
There Fame did come to me
In her trailing satin gown
With a cloak of velvet, silk and fur,
On her head a diadem.
There Fame did say to me
As she laid her hand on mine,
“Look not on Love, but follow me.”
I followed Fame, as a will-of-the-wisp,
And left Love weeping there.

Years passed on and I had Fame
And a heart as cold as a stone.
I lived alone for the praise of men,
But my heart did live alone.
And as I looked at my diadem
And the trailing costly dress,
I thought this is all—all I have on earth—
My soul I have sold for this.

Then Fame did leave me to weep alone.
The fickle adoration given by the crowd
Went to the next who gave amusement
To their fickle, jaded sense.

I had served Ambition’s schemes
And Fame and I did part.
And I was left alone, forlorn,
Without a friend on earth.

In the green old-fashioned garden
I walked with weary feet
And wandered toward the fountain
Where was the garden-seat.
Again Love did come to me
With his strong protecting arms
I laid my head on his shoulder
And sighed to be at rest.
When Wealth came to our trysting-place
And Love in his homely dress
Could only stammer as Wealth’s cold eye

Did break Love's heart and he did fly.

Wealth told of all—

All he could do for me,

Of the gems and garments that he could buy

Of social prestige, position high,

Of a life all free from fear of want,

With a future assured of ease,

When I demurred and spoke of Love,

Wealth said, "Have you not thought

What it means to give to your children dear

The things that Wealth has brought?

Have you the right to keep from them

A future all warm and bright?

Would you think that Love can assure you these

When he knows not where he has the right

Even to earn his daily bread?"

Then with Wealth I went my way.

The costly furs protecting me

From sting of winter's cold;

My shimmering silken garments

Trailing over marble floors;

The dainty shoes upon my feet;

My filmy laces, rare;

The gems that sparkled on my hands,

Around my neck and in my hair,

All added to my beauty

And told to every eye

That Wealth had given to me

All—all that Wealth could buy.

But the jewels sparkling on my brow

Was my badge of servitude,

Beneath my silken garments

Was the gown of servitude.

The golden chains about my neck

Were chains of slavery.

And Wealth's palatial mansion

Was my house of slavery.

And the ring that Wealth placed on my hand

Was a sign of slavery.

Years passed on and Wealth had found
A younger, fairer face
Not marred by signs of bitter tears,
But still had youthful grace.
Wealth tired of me, as he had tired of those—
Of those who had gone before.
He tired of me as he tired of them
And turned me from his door.

All, all alone, without a soul
Who cared for or needed me,
I walked again in the garden cool
And sat on the garden-seat.
My shoes were old, my gown was torn,
And I laid my drooping head
Upon the back of the garden-seat
And thought that Love was dead.
The sun-dial showed late afternoon,
Then the sun did hide its head,
As I wept in anguish and bitterness
For Youth forever fled,
For Beauty, forever fled.

Again Love stood beside me
And held my drooping head;
Not once did he e'er chide me
But gave me love instead.
And there in that old garden
Love and I did live again,
Did work and watch and tend
The flowers within the garden,
And there by its sparkling fountain
We made our home again.

Publication. *Arista and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: J. F. Rowny Press, 1921), pp. 13–17. The printed “Though I tired hard to please her” is retained.

Longing for Love

Come, ye winds of early morning,
 Come, all ye winds that blow.
On your wings bear ye this warning
 Wherever ye may go.
Look ye well for my true-love,
 Look well on land and sea.
And when ye find my own true-love,
 Then bring him back to me.

The bird that sings in yonder bower
 Is singing to its mate.
The waning moon but marks the hour
 Before it is too late.
But if ye find that love I've missed,
 That I must ever loveless be,
Blow ye then wher'er ye list,
 But come not back to me.

Publication. *Arista and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: J. F. Rowny Press, 1921), p. 18.

Gathering Flowers

Three little maids on a summer day
 Were gathering flowers on the lea.
Said each little maid, "I will pick the flower,
 The flower I should love to be."

One little maid with a wide, white brow.
 And a look proud, calm and cool
Chose a tall white lily in the oak tree's shade,
 By the side of a quiet pool.

Another with gentle downcast look,
 And a modest clinging grace,
Chose the violet blue in a hidden spot,
 As it grew in its sheltered place.

But the other maid, red of lip and cheek,
 With eyes cold, large and bright,
Chose the flaunting poppy, whose petals red
 Had fallen e'er the night.

Presented by the pupils of Maude B. Fischer at the Easter recital, March 21, 1921.

Publication. *Arista and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: J. F. Rowny Press, 1921), p. 19.

Spirit of Light

Give me the gift of song,
 Spirit of Light.
That I may right the wrong,
 That saddens my sight.
Give me the power to sing,
As flight is given an angel's wing,
 Spirit of Light.

Give me the gift of song,
 Spirit of Light.
The sun is low, the day is long,
 Dark is the night.
Heavenly voices then shall sing,
The song which I to earth shall bring,
 Spirit of Light.

Give me the gift of song,
 Spirit of Light.
Then may I sing to the toiling throng
 Songs in their night.
And as they hear those voices sing,
They'll know that light the day will bring,
 O Spirit of Light.

Publication. *Arista and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: J. F. Rowny Press, 1921), p. 20.

Bibliography

Works by Hunt and documentary sources

Works by Lillian Amber Hunt

“The Song in My Dreams.” *Out West* 44, no. 3 (September 1916): 104. Listed in the contents as “The Song of My Dreams.”

Arista and Other Poems. Los Angeles: J. F. Rowny Press, 1921.

Documentary and bibliographical sources

Hunt, Lillian Amber. Author-inscribed copy of *Arista and Other Poems*, with pasted April 1922 notice. Local source scan from the University of California copy.

“Lillian A Hunt.” *U.S., Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current*. Memorial 249478701; cemetery record for Hollywood Forever, accessed 2025.

Open Library. “J. F. Rowny Press.” Publisher catalog, accessed August 2026.

Out West 44, no. 3 (September 1916). Original volume scan, University of Chicago copy.

Colophon

Production record

This critical reader's edition was prepared for *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*. It is set in EB Garamond at six by nine inches. The cover uses unlettered artwork supplied by Brian Kim Stefans, reset with the live series typography and standard palette.

The poetry was transcribed and collated against the 1916 *Out West* page and the complete 1921 source scan. The presentation inscription, contemporary clipping, cemetery record, and grave photograph are archived with the production files.