



PAUL B. BACHTELL

*At Lucifer's Portals
and Other Verses*

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

At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses

Paul B. Bachtell

A Critical Reading Edition

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The Text-Tech Papers

Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry

Archival Images

A short selection from the source record



Paul B. Bachtell in the Los Angeles Herald profile that introduced the fifteen-year-old as a “child poet,” May 26, 1905.



Private Paul B. Bachtell, Signal Corps, in the Oregon Agricultural College wartime yearbook, 1918.

Editorial Note

This reading edition is reset from the complete source scan of *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses* (1917), not from an earlier modern transcription. It retains the book's order, stanza structure, meaningful indents, sectional divisions, subtitle, dedication, and author's preface. Physical wraps imposed by the narrow source page are rejoined where the wider page permits. Obvious OCR substitutions and scan artifacts have been removed, while Bachtell's spelling, diction, dialect, and punctuation are otherwise preserved.

The securely attributed "The Yank Behind the Gun" (1918) follows the book as post-book verse. The unbylined clipping "Der Kaiser" is not treated as authorial text. Bachtell's unrecovered 1931 play *The Skull* is documented in the biography and datasheet.

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Introduction

Paul Bradshaw Bachtell came of age in Lancaster, California, where a newspaper profile introduced the fifteen-year-old as a “child poet.” His sole book, *At Lucifer’s Portals and Other Verses* (1917), is an unruly Southern California miscellany: a long comic voyage across the Styx, evolutionary and religious argument, war protest, sentimental address, dialect humor, and poems retained from youth. This edition resets the complete book in its original order, restores its stanza shapes and meaningful indents from the source scan, and adds the securely attributed wartime poem “The Yank Behind the Gun” (1918).

Biography

Paul Bradshaw Bachtell was born in Denver, Colorado, on January 5, 1890, the son of the attorney Norris B. Bachtell and Mande T. Williams Bachtell. City directories and county records place the family first in Denver and then, by the opening years of the twentieth century, in California’s Antelope Valley. Lancaster remained the center of Paul Bachtell’s adult life. A 1905 profile in the *Los Angeles Evening Herald* presented him at fifteen as a “child poet” and printed “It Pays to Know,” a moral lyric that he would preserve twelve years later in his only published collection. The notice is the earliest securely identified appearance of his verse and shows that poetry was already part of his public identity during adolescence.

In 1916 Bachtell was one of the incorporators of the *Ledger Gazette Publishing Company* in Lancaster. The corporate record connects him to the local newspaper enterprise, although the surviving evidence does not establish the exact editorial or managerial position he held. The following year *Los Angeles* publisher B. R. Baumgardt issued *At Lucifer’s Portals and Other Verses*. Its forty-six titled pieces range from the extended comic narrative of its title poem to religious speculation, evolutionary argument, civic and patriotic verse, sentimental addresses, dialect monologues, and a concluding group labeled “Poems of Youth.” Reviews and notices appeared far beyond Southern California—in New York, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Sacramento, and Des Moines—often treating the book’s mixture of satire and earnest moralizing as its defining feature.

During the First World War Bachtell served as a private in Company A, Third Training Battalion, Signal Corps. In 1918 he was attached to the National Army training detachment at Oregon Agricultural College in Corvallis, where a local newspaper described him as one of the detachment's newspapermen. The Corvallis Gazette-Times printed his "The Yank Behind the Gun" on July 30, 1918, with his name, rank, and unit. A second clipping, "Der Kaiser," survives among his papers, but the visible copy bears no byline and cannot be assigned to him with the same confidence. The college record documents military training, not enrollment for a degree.

After the war Bachtell entered the legal profession. He was admitted to the State Bar of California in March 1923 and received bar number 8408. Los Angeles County deed abstracts and notarial notices trace his later professional and property activity in Lancaster. Copyright records also reveal an otherwise lost dramatic work: *The Skull*, described as a tragedy-burlesque in three acts, was deposited for copyright on April 29, 1931, under registration D unpub. 10331. No manuscript, printed edition, or performance record has yet been located, so its text cannot be included here.

On April 7, 1938, Bachtell married Hilda H. Carr of Aspermont, Texas, in Yuma County, Arizona. He died only five weeks later, in Los Angeles on May 12, 1938. The cause of death remains unverified in the surviving research record. He was buried on May 17 at Los Angeles National Cemetery, plot 52 C/25. His brief literary career nevertheless preserves an unusual bridge between the booster-era Antelope Valley, Los Angeles book culture, wartime camp journalism, and the comic-demotic strain of early Southern California verse.

This little book, I dedicate

*To you that like my verses,—
Like them, yea, though critics, great,
Bestow on me their curses.*

A Personal Word

Reader! This is a book of verses, and, as such, it may bear already the antithesis of your blessing; but if your prejudices against composition in meter and rhyme are not unconquerable, and you will spare sufficient time from your business cares and your sweetheart's, husband's (?), or wife's (?) last billet-doux to thumb these pages, you may discover in the contents some real excuse for the existence of this little volume and incidentally enjoy a laugh or two, a sigh, perhaps even a thrill.

What is published is published; and I have no excuses to offer. However, dear reader—"dear" if you have followed me thus far—I have several assurances to give: First, this book is not a rhapsody of love. Second, it does not eulogize any adorable creature's eyebrow (with all due respect to Petrarch be this said), nor does it depict the skeleton closet of a broken heart. Third, it does not moralize at length; for, than this, nothing would damn it more effectively. Fourth, if this book, by chance, is illumined by a spark of real inspiration, the same may be traced to the midnight oil rather than to divine fires from on high.

In offering this little volume I am well aware that prejudices against poetry are as common as uncomely faces; but, nevertheless, being full of folly, possibly; and ambition, most assuredly; and adventurous courage, without a doubt; I submit the fruits of well intended labors, for better or for worse, hoping above all else that the most heart-rending of all fates is not in store for me—that of being persistently ignored.

Prejudices against poetry! What a task to combat them! Prejudices begotten in youth in the drudgery of scanning iambics and trochees, anapests, dactyls, and Heaven knows what not, under the befuddling gaze of a stern schoolmaster, and fostered in the agony of diving hopelessly after the meaning concealed in unfathomable classics; prejudices nourished by the scads of insufferable verses that miraculously find their way into print; prejudices stimulated by newspaper jokes and gibes, and immeasurably strengthened by one's wholesome horror of the proverbial, dreamy-eyed, crescent-shaped, long-haired unfortunate who writes odes to tree-tops and doggerel ditties to angels' faces which he sees in the moon; prejudices that are given the finishing touches by the apprehension felt for the esteemed dear friend who shows symptoms of running poetically amuck.

Where is there the village that does not boast of at least one budding poetical genius? Where the town in which poets are not as numerous as obesity cures? Where the city in which they do not flock in appalling hundreds? Unfortunate poet! Doubly unfortunate poet's friend, who finds it incumbent upon him, as a sacred duty of friendship, to finance the poet's indigent stomach that the star rover may indulge in rhapsodies on foolscap! The tragedy of being a poet!—especially an every-day lofty-browed poet, who will not sing of anything more commonplace than mythological goddesses and the astral chimes.

Dear reader, I have not sung of mythological goddesses—some of our modern “Eves” have all the goddesses of antiquity backed off the boards, anyway—and the astral chimes have tinkled at the invocation of my muse, times few, and but softly at that.

I have spoken of prejudices against poetry, and of the hand-to-mouth contingent of rippling rhymsters who fail to take the public by storm by juggling such words as “love” and “dove,” and “broke” and “no joke.” I have not spoken of the Shelleys and Hugos, of the Poes and Longfellows, nor is it my purpose to do so. “Genius sits alone in cold sublimity above the common herd,” as someone has said, and a plea in its behalf would be as “sounding brass and tinkling-cymbals.” You who have followed me thus far possibly will thumb, at least, the pages that follow; so, craving your indulgence for not writing so well as “The Immortals,” I consign this little book to whatever fate your critical judgment may hold in store. —The Author.

At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses

Stage I | The complete 1917 book

Forty-six poems in the order and divisions of the first edition.

Opening Verse

Come, Friend, Let's Don the Cap and Bells

Come, friend, let's don the cap and bells
And have our little jest.
While, 'mid life's bursting battle-shells.
We grope our way to—rest.

Oh, verily, 'twixt womb and tomb
We have not long to tarry;
The morn may bring the cannon's boom;—
So while there's time be merry!

Yea, we have loved and fought and wept;
We've banqueted and fasted;
Our hopes, to starry heights, have leapt,
And fallen, seared and blasted.

Despite all, we've survived the worst
That darkened life's closed pages,
And into laughter still can burst
Though warfare 'round us rages.

Strange, is it not? But so man's made;—
A child of tears and laughter.
Destined for the digger's spade
So soon his good laughs after.

So let us don the cap and bells
And have our little jest,
While, 'mid life's bursting battle-shells,
We grope our way to—rest.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 15.

At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses

At Lucifer's Portals

Through Stygian waves, at dusk, a spectral boat,
Mysteriously propelled toward shore, remote.
Sped swiftly on, with Charon at the helm,—
It was en route to Satan's populous realm.
An aged monk; a sullen, vicious stoker;
A daring gambler; and a handsome broker;
Two soulmates, who, ere death, were lunatics,
Were being piloted across the Styx.

The ghostly band was under Heaven's curse.
And doubtless none were dying to converse;
The stoker, though, athirst for information.
Made bold to speak, and seeming trepidation
Shook his sepulchral voice: "Old timer, ho!
You've crossed this Devil's creek a time or so;—
Yon hell-ward sky glares ominously red;
How is the climate—tropical, ahead?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" quoth the pilot. "What, you quake?
Your voice did tremble, and I believe you shake."
"B-r-r-r, I am cold, make haste," the stoker spake.

"Already 'tis too warm," the gambler grumbled;
Then, to himself, contemptuously mumbled:
"He scarce would tremble so if packed in ice:
He lied; it is not cold, but cowardice."

"Oh, may the devil roast you!" said another,
"The rest are in no hurry, bloodless brother."

"Bah, sir!" the stoker sneered. "I have endured
Roastings before: I am, to heat, inured;—
And, therein, am more fortunate than you,
Or any other member of this crew.
B-r-r-r, I am cold," he said, with chattering teeth,
"A while ago my body froze to death
In icy sea, where ship was wrecked in storm;
And though in Hades I am not yet warm."

Then chuckled, loud and long, the pilot, old;
The rest were silent, and no soul made bold
To find out whether he was really cold.

Dusk upon the Stygian river!
Through the glowing waves, a-quiver.
The boat sped on, with Charon at the helm;
It was en route to Satan's populous realm.

Next spake the gambler: "I am burning, sir,"—
He paused in speech;—the soulmates, startled, were.
And, wondering if he had become ignited.
Stared at him apparently affrighted,—
"With curiosity am burning, sir,
To know just what is going to occur;
And in particular I am concerned
To know if we poor devils shall be burned?
Whereas my corse by worms will be consumed,
Is this still living part of me now doomed
To undergo cremation
In the region of damnation?"

"Be patient," said the spirit at the stern,
"Enough to know that none of you shall burn."

Ah, there were exclamations of surprise;
And heavenward ascended joyous sighs.
And Charon reassured them 'twas the truth;
Said they were incombustible, in sooth.

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed a spirit, lank and tall;
"Oh, glory hallelujah!

Hear me, husband,—do you?—
We shall not burn at all!"
And to his breast, the former half-wit drew
His better half, and answered, "Yes, do you?"

Some snickered at the pair; the gambler burst
Into loud laughter, though he was accurst.
And, soon, the husband, waxing affable,
Ventured a jest, which was not laughable.

Old Charon hummed a lively ragtime waltz.
And creditably, though many notes were false.

"Sweet music!" chirped the spouse. "Oh, darling mate!
We'll not be burned; come, let us celebrate!"
The soulmates, who, ere death, were lunatics,
Though they were on the infernal River Styx,
Embraced, began to "rag," and wildly laughed;
And dangerously rocked the infernal craft;
And Charon shook his fist and loud did storm:
"Avast! In Hades 'ragging' is bad form!"

The erring souls avasted, much chagrined;
And, in confusion, murmured: "Have we sinned?"

And Charon said, with magisterial air,
While others laughed and snickered at the pair:
"Alas, poor things! you did embrace too tightly;
And, when you wiggle, wiggle very slightly:
Such dancing is, to say the least, unsightly."

The soulmates hung their heads; the stoker scowled.
"A dangerous couple, that!" he loudly growled;
"They must be watched: the great half-wits might play
Leapfrog, or suddenly give way
To some new mania, and upset the boat;
And I am cold, and hell is still remote."

The sinister craft, through the waters, sped
Toward the shore of the damned with the souls of the dead.

The genial old pilot, who relished a joke,
Winked at the soul of the gambler, and spoke

"Pray tell me, which luckless member
Of this ill-fated crew
Has been the rashest gambler,
And least successful, too."

The gambler could think, though his brains were dead;
He inspected each member, reflected, and said:
"By the pitchfork of Satan! I believe that I can,
On first venture, point to the guilty man.
Let us bet on the question, my genial old shade.
If nothing is risked, why, naught will be made.
Diversion we'll have, lest we think too intent.

On our rather precarious predicament.
And our dear earthly lives, which, it seems, were ill-spent.”

“But, you sporty old stager.
You’ve nothing to wager;
Not even a soul, as the devil owns that.”
And into the river the pilot spat.

“In truth,” mourned the gambler, “I had forgot
That Death has made mine the pauper’s loathed lot.”
The master of cardcraft was wrathful, indeed.
That so very embarrassing was his need;
He lacked even credit;—’twas truly “to grieve”!
Old Death had not left him “one card up a sleeve”
Wherewith, in this matter, to venture a lead.

Again spake the rogue, who, on earth, had thrown dice,
But who, now, was unable to gratify vice:
“A very good loser I always have been;
My soul I have lost, but still I can grin.”
And the gambler grinned broadly, though sullen his mood:
Then queried: “In Hades, is gambling tabooed?”

The ancient shade, who was a heartless joker,
Cried lustily, “The devil’s imps play poker;
Throw missionaries in their huge jack-pot,
And those poor rebels usually get hot.”

The worthy monk twice crossed himself in haste;
The broker told the stoker that the puns were in bad taste.
And the pilot, old and hoar.
Chuckled long, then spoke once more
To the soul that looked so pensive,
To the soul so apprehensive,
Who did silently deplore
He might shuffle cards no more,
But might do the double shuffle on a hot, infernal shore;—
Or, perchance, a later dance
If the shore were incandescent;—
Tortured by the heat, incessant.
Do some modern trot or prance.

The pilot, old and hoar.

Chuckled long, then spoke once more:
“Ye scoundrels will have need of recreation
In that sulphuric realm of dire damnation;
And ye may sport a little on the side,—
That is, when you’re not being purified.”

The soulmates, much relieved, in concord sighed;
The ex-coal heaver smote his breast and cried:
“Land lubbers in this ancient tub!
Hurrah for old Beelzebub!
I thought that I would have to stoke.
Without a rest in fumes and smoke.
As long as there is coal or coke.”

The gambler rejoiced,
Though his joy was not voiced,
That he might be privileged to revel and game;
But the sorrowful contemplation soon came:
 “You sporty old stager,
 You’ve nothing to wager,
Not even a soul, as the devil owns that!”
And into the river of hell he spat.

The gambler was wishing that he were extinct
When the pilot looked at him shrewdly and winked:—
 “You have not told me who.
 In this unearthly crew.
 Has been the rashest gambler and least successful, too.”

The gambler inspected the sullen stoker.
The soulmates, the monk, and then the broker.
The gambler could think, though his brains had died.
So after reflecting awhile he replied:

“The luckless monk, before his bones were laid
To welcome rest, the rashest venture made:
It dearly cost him love and worldly pleasures
To play his game for doubtful heavenly treasures;
He played to win a big celestial stake.
What more uncertain venture could man make?
And had he been successful,—well,
He would not be en route to hell.”

Old Charon chuckled long, then scratched his head,
And to the cocksure, brazen gambler said:
“Our holy brother, sir, from grace ne’er fell;
He goes on missionary work to hell.”

“What—what is that?” the gambler gasped, “Is’t so?
And has he treasures in heaven, do you know?”

“Indeed he has,” the ancient shade averred,
“And treasures with him, too, upon my word.”

The curious gambler, at the monk, did stare;
That worthy spirit was absorbed in prayer.
“So he has really been in paradise!
And is he, then, an angel in disguise?”

“Hist! more of that anon. Now cock your ear,
And gaze upon this woeful broker, here.

“He is the luckless member
Of this unearthly crew,
Who was the rashest gambler,
And the least successful, too.

“Time was when the rogue had wealth and brains;
(Aye, valueless, now, are the paltry remains)

Dear to him, then, was his life:
The rogue recklessly jeopardized his name;
Staked honor and life, and played his game;—
And the prize was his neighbor’s wife.

He staked his salvation, so many did claim;
He squandered his coin on the giddy dame,
And, oh, how the cold cash went!—
(To stir up a hornets’ nest of woes)
He stole her from under her husband’s nose,—
An every-day event!

Now, dutiful Satan, in this game of sin
Held a promising hand, and played to win
Three souls, without delay:
And the Conqueror Worm, in the background lurked
While the venom of Eden’s old Serpent worked;—
The husband made a play.

"The blood of the husband, the blood of the fool,
Did mix on the floor in a crimson pool;

And a widow stared, wild-eyed;

And the lover bewailed, as he gave up the ghost:

'Oh, I was a fool! All, all is lost!'

The woman wailed o'er each homicide.

"The rogue had to leave all his credit and cash;

He won nothing, lost all, in his venture, rash.

To win but a paltry thing.

And the rogue, in the region, infernal, I say,

Will repent of his folly, while his clay

On earth lies mouldering."

The gambler could think, though his brains were dead,

And, thoughtfully, to the pilot, he said:

"'Twas folly, indeed, to stake honor and life

In an effort to win another man's wife;

And as he is now in the realm of damnation,

I judge that he lost his chance of salvation.

And, as in my case, so he will lament

That he lost his dear flesh, ere his riches were spent.

His leaving the dame was a trivial event."

The gambler ceased speaking. Charon addressed

The broker, whose spirits were plainly depressed:

"To risk one's life, rashly, for woman's sweet sake,

Is a terrible blunder,—too much is at stake;

If he loses his life, he also doth lose her;

Another will probably win and abuse her;

The lady won't follow her hero, alack!

And the poor, foolish fellow can not go back."

Then muttered the miserable homicide:

"So I have concluded since I died."

"Cheer up!" cried the pilot. 'Ere long you will find

A lovelier dame than the one left behind.

There are not such beauties on earth as in Hades;

Ah, there you will find some superb spirit ladies!"

The once gallant broker, who passively stared

At a glare in the distance, sharply declared:

“Not a fig-leaf do I care
About the spirit ladies there,
Or in creation anywhere.”

“What, ho! already a woman hater
Because of your curse?—She’ll, join you later.”

“I hope not, old pilot; I hope she’ll be saved.
’Twas largely my fault that we misbehaved.
I hate not the dangerous sex, entire;
But I care not to play, hereafter, with fire.
But say,—must we sinners eternally stay
In the region, infernal? Tell me, pray.
Or will we grow pinions, and fly away?”

“A spirit, when purified, need not remain
In Satan’s well governed and marv’lous domain:
But it largely depends on the spirit ladies,
How long the male spirits remain in Hades;
You may find it hard to behave as you should.
And you can not depart until you are good;
And some are so charming you’ll not care to leave ’em.
Especially if your departing would grieve ’em.”

“My amorous old pilot! cease to harp
On the dear spirit ladies,” came the sharp
Retort of the broker.

Charon swore,
And declared he’d enlighten an ingrate no more.

The gambler, alas! was deploring again;
And he mournfully muttered his sad refrain,

“A sporty old stager,
With nothing to wager,
Not even a soul, as the devil owns that!”
And into the river of hell he spat.

Silence awhile,—then disconsolately:
“The Devil and Death have pauperized me;
But heavenly treasures the monk doth possess;
So, it seems, he played shrewdly and scored success.’

He glanced at the monk, and, amazed, he saw
Great glory, revealed; and he shuddered with awe;

He stared at the saintly visage, upturned;
Saw the light of the holy zeal that burned
In the eyes of the monk,—in prayer, upraised.
And the gambler muttered, as still he gazed:
“If the opportunity, glorious, be given
In Hades, to win precious treasures in heaven,
Methinks ’twill be better to start afresh,
And play a new game I ne’er played in the flesh.”

The sinister craft, through the waters, sped
Toward the ominous glare, toward the region of dread.
And, silent the woebegone souls of the dead.

The indistinct craft, when last it was seen,
Was near the dread shore, and the monk, serene,
Was holding a luminous crucifix.
Which blazed in the mist on the River Styx;
And lo! ’round his head was a halo of glory.
As he prayed for the wretches in purgatory.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 17–26.

Greetings

Oh, believe me, this wish is a wish sincere:
That during the year
 Pleasure, success and prosperity,
 Be apportioned thee
In such a measure that thou wilt climb
 Most rapidly
To the heights, sublime.
Oh, may you ever improve with time!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 27.

Southern California

There is a land where bird spreads pinion
O'er an ever green dominion;
Where the tuneful tongue of bird is never mute.
Oh, it is an El Dorado,
Free from blizzard and tornado,
Land of mineral and fruit!
'Tis beside the old Pacific,
Where bloom orange groves prolific;
'Tis the Southland, by the sunset sea carest,—
The fruitful Eden of the Golden West.

Empire by the Western waters,
Dear to all her sons and daughters.
Is a land where it is always blossom time;
Everlasting Summer smiles
On the land and sea and isles;
'Tis a celebrated clime.
Where loom azure peaks, snow-crested;—
Land with untold grandeur vested.
Where the verdant earth and sea and sky combine
To make the homeland very near divine.

'Tis a land of grain and clover;
'Tis a cotton land, moreover;
'Tis sheltered by its mountains, robed in pines;—
Famous for its clime, propitious;
Pears and citrus fruits, delicious;
Figs and olives, nuts and wines.

There are yet untilled, rich regions
Where Dame Fortune becks to legions:—
Greater wealth, by far, the Golden West can yield
Enriched will be new hosts that take the field.

Our progressive population,
Helping to enrich the nation,
Will, more celebrated, make the peerless land.
All our splendid cities flourish,
And the world we help to nourish,—
Rich resources at command.

Wealth beladen ships are steaming
From our harbors, calm and gleaming;
And our land shall prosper now as ne'er before.
With Panama's new gateway at our door.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 28–29.

Here's to the Prince of Good Fellows

Here's to the Prince of Good Fellows,
The God of a myriad of hearts;
Bestower of countless blessings,
 Yet master of all black arts.

Best friend to the king of finance.
Or battered knight of "shank's mare";
To the married man or the lover,—
 Benefactor beyond compare!

Oh, here's to the Prince of Good Fellows,
Prince of the lustrous wings;
Loved and extolled by all classes;—
Shown deference by Earth's kings!

Here's to the Prince of Good Fellows,
 Under whose wings, outspread,
Earth's mightiest nations seek refuge.
 While war piles to heaven the dead!

Here's to the Savior of Millions,
To whom starving multitudes flee;
While the drunk beggar. Mars, whose deeds
 smell to the stars,
 Bends his supplicating knee!

Here's a toast to that Prince of Good Fellows,
Hailed by the world as supreme—
The Almighty American Dollar,
With the Wings and the Eagle's Scream!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 30.

Why Trembles the Earth Under Martial Tread?

Why trembles the earth under martial tread,
And why are the marts of the world dyed red,
And the weird nights illumined with bonfires of dead?

The mailed fist descending—the fist world-old;
The multitudes writhing in anguish, untold;
The munition-kings reaping their harvest of gold!

Industry's wheels grinding night and day
To keep ever the Dogs of War in the fray,
And the Wolf from the Nation's hearth-stone, away!

The warrior's strong arm and the scientist's brain
In unison working with might and main
To swell the vast ranks of the crippled and slain!

The best manhood of nations, fast or slow.
Sinking from sight in the crimson tide's flow;
Chivalry's bones to be picked by the crow!

Multitudinous death bursting everywhere,—
From under the waves, on earth, in air,
Till the vitals of nations are laid bare!

Proud Civilization's masque torn amain.
The tusks of the tiger showing plain,
And still on the brow the Brand of Cain!

Why trembles the earth under martial tread.
And why are the marts of the world dyed red,
And the weird nights illumined with bonfires of dead?

To the hell of the earth-world, littered with slain,
There comes from the Fiend's pleasant hell, the refrain:
"Tis the curse of the world-old passion for gain.
The magic, the tragic passion for gain!"

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 31.

The Millionaire's Last Search for Gold

On the desert, dark and dismal
As are Stygian depths, abysmal,
One who had toss'd
Gold right and left, sported and swaggered,
Mad with thirst, in darkness staggered.
All hope was lost!

Creed had caused him to brave peril;
Enter carcass-strewn, hot, sterile
 Death Valley, dread:
With guide and beasts he had come hither;
Thirst had caused their veins to wither;
 They now were dead.

Sleep o'ercame him. Parched, delirious,
Lay the money-king, imperious;—
 Drank hogsheads dry;
Dreamed of brooklets, drank insanely,—
With unslackened thirst drank vainly
 And marveled why!

Nearly naked, parched, delirious,
Lay the money-king, imperious,
'Neath desert sky;
Dark the night, the sands were flying;
And the millionaire was dying.
And none stood by.

When he, in luxury, was sporting,
And with princely ones consorting,
'Twas his intent.
That when he died, no burial, lowly.
But great pomp and service, holy.
Should grace the last event.

To be embalmed, he had desired;
Ah, most handsomely attired.
 His precious clay
In costly casket should be cased,
And in sarcophagus, then placed,

Would mock Decay.

Night and desert; heaven covered
With a shroud wherein Storm hovered!

The Croesus, great.
Strove hard to 'rise,—Wind shrieked derision;
Stinging sands impaired his vision;
He lay prostrate.

Storm now is rampant; crashing thunder,
It seems will split the earth asunder;
Each vivid flare
Above that Hades, stretching vastly.
Lights an object, grim and ghastly,
With vacant stare.

In the night—the panther crying—
On the desert he was lying.
How peaceful there!
Wine and Revelry had cloyed him,—
Thirst and Desert,—they destroyed him,
The millionaire.

No sarcophagus protected;
And rapacious birds respected
Not his rank;
Nor did the beast that, expeditely,
Made those poor remains less sightly,—
A panther, lank.

Snarling things with empty paunches.
Sit, tonight, on their lean haunches.
Among his bones;
Yelp and howl, as though lamenting

That the remnants they are scenting
Are bare as stones.

That once proud head lies weather-beaten;
Bone alone has not been eaten;

Teeth shine dull:
Jealous night wind moans and hisses,
As the sickly moonlight kisses
That grinning skull.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 32–34.

Wages of Sin

She's very drunk—Madam Sinclair,
So richly gowned, and oh, so fair,—
Drunk in the cafe's din and glare.

She fixes a pathetic stare
On one with slightly ruffled hair,—
Her escort, well-groomed, debonaire.
He sees that angel face aflush
With paint from Demon Highball's brush.
No more her eyes hold mystic spell—
Twin oysters would look just as well.
She's very drunk—the blurred lights swim;
He sees the truth—it sobers him.
To lose her head—a stupid thing!
She might become embarrassing.

Not yet a hardened devotee
Of Bacchanalian Life is she.
But just a woman who may be;—
A widow with men at her heels,
But still a woman with ideals;
One who has many trials withstood,
Has great capacity for good.
And knows the cares of motherhood.

She fights to seem half sober, still;
The highballs struggle with her will.
Her escort over stein and foam
Suggests a “taxicab” and “home.”

They rise to leave the paradise
Of revelry and tinsel vice.

Oh, oft man clutches—just too late!
She staggers and collides with—Fate:
Reels 'gainst a couple on their way
To chairs in Highlife's thronged cafe,—
A pretty girl with painted cheeks

And breath that, with wine's odor, reeks;
A young man yet unweaned from school.

Not bad, but sometimes—just a fool.

The wretched woman stumbles, slips—
Filled glasses pause midway to lips—

Some thought she'd fainted—just a few;
The woman's wretched escort knew!
Men strained their necks, and women, too.
A myriad eyes were turned that way
To gaze at Folly's prostrate prey.
A grandoise dame, with lips, gin-wet,
Stared icily through her lorgnette;
Her spouse, half man, half "missing link,"
Grinned foolishly and took a drink.

For moments, few—which teemed with hell,
Shamed womanhood lay where she fell;
Then, rescued by the hands of men,
The fallen idol stood, again;
But oh, so altered in the eyes
Of those who'd helped her to arise,—
An escort who urged quick escape,
A young man friendly with the Grape!
Some wondered why, amazed, she stared
(A voice, the while, in ragtime blared)
Stared into eyes with wine, aflame;
Stared at a face which burned with shame!
Inaudibly, she gasped a name;
Then softly moaned to one held dear:
"You—and that—painted—girl—in here!"
On, with the care-free midnight revel,—
Who cares or thinks about the devil!
On, with the music, mirth and laughter,—
Who cares about the morning after!
On with the Bacchanalian fun.
Mute, horrified, stand—Mother, Son!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 35–36.

Like Unto the Vampire

I saw a woman of spotless name
Bedecked in gaudy attire;
And heard her vow she would play the game
As plays the artful vampire.

Oh, much she knew of the vampire's charms;
The vampire's artful style;
The maddening lure of her outstretched arms;
The vampire's serpent guile.

Oh, much she had learned of the vampire's spell—
(Which lures to hell's abyss
As many a man has known so well
As he clung to the vampire's kiss.)

And she who had ever prayed to God
In an humble and righteous way,
And never the primrose path had trod,
Prepared to seek her prey.

But to lure men's willing souls to hell,—
Her purpose was none such:
'Twas to lure back the spouse whom she loved too well,-
To win him from vampire's clutch!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 37.

The Pedigreed Lady

There lived a plain man, and his honest heart beat
For a pedigreed lady whose fancies were fleet;
And he laid his heart at his lady's feet
She toyed with the heart—'twas a pastime, sweet;
Then cast it away for Woe's hell-hounds to eat.

Now the selfsame lady lost her head
O'er a handsome rogue whose soul was dead,
(A woman had killed it,—he'd ceased to care
For the beautiful devil, so clever, so fair,
The havoc she'd wrought had blanched his hair)
And she who had toyed with the plain man's heart,
Found deep in her own a poisoned dart;
And the pedigreed lady stooped as he willed,—
The handsome love-pirate whose soul had been killed.
He found her—a lady enjoying life's sweets;
He left her—a woman of the streets.

The virtuous shunned her, the world called her "Bad!";
And, oh, how she longed for that heart she once had,
That honest heart she had cast away
When she laughed men to scorn, ere she fell man's prey.
And the woman of scarlet breathed a prayer:
"O, merciful God, let him know and care!"
For the woman of sin had learned the worth
Of an honest heart on this sham-damned earth.
But the heart of the plain man nevermore beats
For the pedigreed lady whom any man greets.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 38.

The Star-Adorned Ensign, Old Glory

The star-adorned ensign, Old Glory by name,
With its stripes of bright silver and stripes of red flame—
Oh, may it triumphantly wave evermore
As Liberty's emblem—unsullied, wave o'er
A nation, peace-loving, yet mighty in war!
Oh, may Right be upheld, all Oppression be quelled,
And our mighty Republic be e'er unexcelled!
Dauntless millions, inspired with glorious zeal,
Would die in behalf of our country's weal:
What invaders could ever withstand our steel!

The world must respect the American flag;
Through the dust, in dishonor, may it never drag.
The loyal and brave resolutely demand
That their flag be respected in every land;
And the loyal and brave will maintain their stand.
Let this edict be hurled to all parts of the world:
That, in all foreign lands where our flag is unfurled,
An invincible nation, just, proud and free,
With army and navy, if it must be,
Will protect all her children from Tyranny!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 39.

Time

(Sonnet)

TIME (Sonnet)

Time bows the stalwart, saps the limbs' good strength,
And spins within thought's dome, the cobwebs, dire;
Beauty, despoiled, doth haggish grow at length:
The human temple, ruined by Time's ire!
If altars crumble, doth religion, too?
The human temple Time doth desecrate,
The spirit, though, will live all aeons through;
True character, e'er mock this mocker, great.
Time brings experience, needed discipline;
And e'en though slight, thy gain in power to face
Responsibility—to turn from sin.
Thy soul hath been improved by Time's good grace!
Regret not thou the seasons as they roll;
Time rends the garment, but he shapes the soul.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 40.

The Dog and the God

In ev'ry man, so we have heard,
A sleeping dog abides;
In ev'ry man, be it averred,
 There is a sleeping God, besides.
Alas! the warning, vicious bark
 Not always doth awake
The sleeping God; he doth not mark
 The soul hath cause to quake;
Else he would silence, by his might,
 The awakened brute ere it could bite.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 41.

Eternal Punishment

The Allwise One, who planned creation, knew
His little world, and surely was aware
How man was constituted; so 'tis true
That He foresaw what evil would ensue.

On some, 'tis said, eternal wrath will burst.
The Maker, the Omniscient One, who knew
That unschooled souls would err, knew from the first
If any being would be so accurst.
When hydra-headed evil doth enmesh
In its drag-net a soul, as yet, unfit.
Will He, who did create world, soul and flesh,
Deny it privilege to start afresh?

He makes a soul, pre-destined to be lost:
It sins a little moment in this world
And then through countless aeons pays the cost—
Down, down to dire damnation, justly toss'd!

Behold the stars! God doeth his work well;
Yet thinkest thou He did create a soul
But to destroy or afflict with hell
it,
Eternally, because, unfit, it fell?

Destructive wrath! Dost hear the threat, aghast?
Oh, He that did create us will perfect;
Not so, if dire damnation, us, will blast;
Nay, ev'ry one shakes hands with God, at last.

World, flesh and devil ultimately school
Aspiring man, still slave of whim and sense;
Awhile he'll flounder, unregenerate fool.
But finally in him the God will rule.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 42.

Dogmas and Creeds

It's not what your ready lips profess,
It's your faith and your life that count:
Your heart may cry "No" while your lips say "Yes";
You may curse in your soul while your lying lips bless.
By your faith and your life you mount!

It's by what you have done and omitted to do
You'll be judged at the Bar when life is through.
Dogmas and creeds are like unto reeds—
But acts, unselfish, and worthy deeds
Weigh heavy in God's true scales;
A creed in the balance but little avails.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 43.

Fight On!

Though your pleasures are past; though your lot is now
loathed;
Though your spirit, in old battered armor, is clothed;
Though life is a torture, prolonged by each breath,—
Don't throw down your cross, and seek refuge in death!
You have sinned,—who has not?—but, at times, you have warred
With heroic zeal, and, some triumphs, have scored.
Your great mission in life is to gain moral strength;—
So do not ignobly surrender at length!
Perhaps, all the dark ways of sin you have trod.
And shamelessly wandered far, far from your God,—
Every transgression is paid for in pain—
Yet, having progressed, you have not lived in vain.
You are wiser, more disciplined than e'er before:
Would you give up the struggle,—seek Acheron's shore?
Though all worldly things that you value, be lost,
Yet, having progressed, you should not count the cost;
So take up your cross, and your journey, renew;
Though hell rage within, yet to Duty be true!
Oh, grind your good sword on Experience's stone,
And draw a keen edge on the Woes you have known,
And cut a straight pathway through Life's tangled wood.
Fight on to the goal,—to superior manhood!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp.
44.

What Good the Music of the Spheres?

What good the odor of the rose, if none, to smell, are near it?
What good the music of the spheres, if there are none to hear it?
And what's the worth of Cosmos,—of Infinitude's display
Of myriad suns and planets—clusters, dippers. Milky Way,
Unnumbered constellations—ah, tell me, what's their worth
Unless the Whole be peopled,—not just our midget-earth?
Wherefore the starry grandeur underneath which, cooped, we crawl.
Unless there's Life to sense, enjoy and profit by it all?
Unless the Whole be peopled, who's to profit by the Whole?—

And who enjoy yon billion stars, as countless aeons roll?
Are yon vast suns but scenery to be enjoyed, afar,
By earth-bound beings only, on one microscopic star?
What purpose serve the singing spheres—the universe, sidereal,—
Unless to serve triumphant Mind as suitable material?
For aught man knows, there are extant, on countless distant spheres,
Great races far beyond the earth's in wisdom and in years.
For aught man knows, why, yonder suns are habitats, sublime,
For high Intelligences, foreign to a planet's clime.
For aught man knows, there beings are, possessed of life, eternal.
And free to roam from star to star and visit realms, supernal.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 45.

From Fish to Man, From Clod to God

From fish to man,—from protoplasmic slime
To man's estate,—oh, 'tis a long hard climb;
For Aeons mark but mile-stones in the rise
From ocean's floor to aeroplane-filled skies!
From first-born monad in the mother-sea
Life traveled long ere reaching you and me.
And after all the untold ages spent,
To what avail hath Life made its ascent
Through various forms, from monad to proud man,
And seemingly according to a plan?—
To end ignobly in six feet of earth
Which man inherits so soon after birth?—
Hath Life, for this, evolved from ocean's cave?—
Doth Evolution's path end at man's grave?
In Frail Mortality, can it be true
The Law of Progress meets its Waterloo?
Is Dust the Alpha and Omega, too?

If man's endowed with an immortal soul
And Godhood is the meet and final goal.
Then, all is well that is preparatory
To ultimate perfection, joy and glory;
Then, purposeful, man's earthly trials and strife;
Then, death is but an incident of life,
And blasted not is all that went before:—
The Aeons' fruits preserved forevermore!

From clod to God,—from protoplasmic slime
To Fields Elysian,—'tis a long, long climb;
For Aeons mark but mile-stones in the rise
From ocean's bottom to celestial skies:
But oh, the richer thus, man's heritage,—
The magic fruits of ev'ry timeless age!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 46.

My Wonderful Self I Am Proud to Be

This was the song of a little green frog
As, complacent, it sat on a water-soaked log:
“My wonderful self I rather would be
Than anything that I ever did see,
For where is the thing that can out-hop me!”

And this was the song of a poor, ugly toad.
As it croaked in a puddle—most wretched abode!—
“Croak, ho! My environment is ideal;
The insects are plenty for many a meal.”

And this was the boast in a lion’s roar
As there dripped from the mighty beast’s maw, human gore:
“I’m king of all beasts; crush me if you can!
I’m swifter than elephant, stronger than man;
My powerful self I am proud to be.
For where is the thing that can vanquish me!”

And this was the boast in an eagle’s scream.
As the lordly bird rose to the clouds agleam:
“Some swim and some crawl, some walk and some run;
But I’m king of the air, I soar with the sun!
My wonderful self I am proud to be.
For where is the thing that can out-fly me!”

The legs of the frog graced a millionaire’s meal;
The toad, by mischance, was crushed under his heel;
At the crook of his finger the jungle-king fell;
His aeroplane hummed the bruised eagle’s death-knell.
And the conqueror laughed a laugh of glee
When he struck the old bird of liberty:
“Ha, where is the fowl that can out-fly me!”

Through opaline skies, above billows of mist,
As though with effulgent Old Sol to keep tryst.
Swift, swiftly the huge bird of steel swept along

And hummed to its master a jubilant song:
”On land or in sky supreme man is at home,
And under the waters of earth may roam.
With lightning-swift cars at his beck and call,

With flying machines
And submarines,
The earth, for his pleasure, will soon be too small.”

And the air-pilot smiled as he thought of his gold—
Yea, truly the key to delights, manifold!
(Ah, many a man while his lot seems ideal
Is destroyed, by mischance, as the toad by man's heel!)

And the millionaire thrilled to his giant bird's song,
As they soared o'er a city, ere something went wrong
And the finis was written in puddles of red
On a junk-littered pavement where lay the dead.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 47–48.

Who Is Who?

Who is who in this world of shams,
Where there's so much of gaudy glitter;
Where two-legged wolves parade as lambs,
And human vultures twitter?—

Where the glister of gold imparts lustre to name;
Where Favoritism oft rules;
Where the rustle of silk may drown Guilt's hiss of shame,
And Merit's at discount—'mongst fools.

Are the seats of the mighty occupied
By only the race's best?—
Ha, many as good, in dank ditches have died.
And Fortune's skirt-hem ne'er carest!

Wealth e'en exalts Folly now and again
So applause resounds over the earth!—
Say, who is who in the world of men
Where Merit should measure Worth?

Yea, who is who in the world of shams,
Of tinsel and veneer?—
Ha, War, Bloody War, howsoever it damns,
Makes the Naked Truth stand clear!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 49.

In the Years After We Have Parted

In the far future years, my darling, long after this dream is o'er;
In the years after we have parted, perhaps to be comrades no more;
Will you fondly remember the lover you smiled on in days of yore?

In the far distant future, my darling, when others do lavish their praise;
In the years after we have parted, and gone on our separate ways;
Will you sometimes think of the lover on whom you now tearfully gaze?

On the fateful night when another makes bold
To sigh, vow and lie, and thy hand to hold;
When he swears by the stars and the inconstant moon
That he doth adore, can't be wedded too soon;
When he tells of affection, he feigns or he feels,
And o'er thee, the old, old madness steals;
And his arm 'round thy slender waist gently slips,
And his kisses melt fervently on thy lips;—
Alas, my beloved!

For thy present devoted lover, my darling, my life, wilt thou sigh?
Will a tear of dear recollection then form in thy dark, lustrous eye?
Oh, I fear that thou wilt not remember my kisses on nights gone by!

Through the years of long, long separation, oh, can you love on just the same?
New loves will console and delight you, for others will kindle the flame;
This love, it may wither to ashes, and I, become only a name!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 50.

As Golden Years Go By

Once, dear, we loved each other,
But we, apart, were torn;
And have we now forgotten
That romance of life's morn?
Oh, hearken to that music!
As heartward sinks that song,
Once more upon our spirits.
Old memories do throng.
Years, had the passion slumbered;
In death-like trance 'twas wrapped
An old cord now is chiming,—
A cord we thought had snapped.
Once more I press you closely;
You smile and whisper low;
Love burns again in your dark eyes
As it burned long ago.

With consecrating nectar.
Your lips do mine baptize;
And train mine in a holy use;
While eyes speak love to eyes.
I sought to learn of heaven
In saints' and sages' lore;
But oh, in one sweet moment.
Your dear love taught me more.
“Our tender love, no power
Can e'er destroy!” we vowed;
But, oh, we had not reckoned
With time's eclipsing cloud!
But still we love each other;
How happy, you and I!
And time shall bind us closer
As golden years go by!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 51.

Lines to U—

Fair maiden! Thy rare beauty would inspire
The worthy poet's pen, the minstrel's lyre;
And doubly so if thou, to smile, wouldst deign;—
Unworthy thee is this, my humble strain.

Eyes, lips and smile! Those eyes alone can light
The Muse's torch, make poesy burn bright.
Those lovely lips! Alas, I can but sigh!
Say,—Cupid stained them with his choicest dye,
And, tracing out their beauteous contour,
He cried: "They're suited to sweet uses, sure!"
Those scarlet lips were made to breathe love's strain,
And kisses, on these thirsting lips, to rain.

Is't wrong to call the lily, sweet? Is't praise?
Think not that mine are idle words to scorn.
How base the lark that doth, no carol, raise
To rising sun, which is the smile of morn:
And more unworthy, I, if silent while.
Mine eyes delightedly behold thy smile.

Were I a bard whose verse would long survive
Thy loveliness, and prove to be the rage,
To celebrate thy virtues, I would strive:—
But Time would soon obliterate the page.

To picture all thy charms, I shall not try.
Since, with the camera, verse can never vie.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 52.

Sonnets to B

Rare maiden! thou musician, masterly,
So lovely and so young,—pray deign to hear!
A rare, supernal power dwells in thee,
Inspiring thy art till we revere.
No classic harp, nor lyre more classic still,
Doth serve thy inspiration, and 'tis well;—
The good piano, touched by thy great skill.
Doth o'er us cast a more entrancing spell.
Oh, when thy mind and lovely hands impart
The transporting emotions, manifold,
Which those symbols record, we know thou art
A master, who interprets masters, old.
But thou, by virtuosos lauded high.
Need not my modest tribute, all too dry.

Emotion's realm, sweet music doth o'er sway:
It calms the staring madman in his rage;
The murd'rous hand of Saul, the harp did stay;
And music makes some caper on Life's stage;
While by its martial tones, straw nerves are brassed;
Sad strains make haughty eyes, their tears to spill;
When naught lures us to live, and hope is passed,
Why, music thrills, when naught we deemed could thrill.
Now, some must play what geniuses have penned,—
Interpret and impart their rapturous madness;
How glorious, then, the art that serves this end;
And such as thou canst give the world much gladness.
So, sweet musician, may thy sphere expand
Till thou art celebrated o'er all the land!

In thee, what charm and radiance combine!
Thy loveliness doth plead its own sweet cause;
Admiring eyes pay homage; 'tis a shrine
Where incense will be burned,—but I must pause.
Lest thy dear modesty be sore oppressed:—
With comely raiment is thy soul endowed;
Thy smile is sunshine to the woe-chilled breast;
A moonbeam, prisoned in a silver cloud,

Thy spirit is. But harken, I implore,
And heed me well: ne'er let thy industry,
'Gainst health and loveliness, wage cruel war!
With e'er increasing beauties, God bless thee!
Preserve and guard thy charms; they please no less
Than doth the wondrous talent you possess.

Sweet lilies, on rank cactus, do not grow;
And star-beams have a high celestial source;
And from thy sweetness, and thy life, we know
Thy character hath nobleness and force.
What moral beauties, all, adorn thy mind;
What noble passions, in thy bosom, swell;—
Thou, being strange, I have not all divined,—
And yet the crystal tone denotes the bell.
When some entrancing strain doth greet the ear;
Or when the nightingale sings us a score,
Th' entire melody, we long to hear;
And we are grieved if we can hear no more:
Thou art the melody, and having heard
Some sundry strains, by all I would be stirred.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 53–54.

Lines to Madame Griselda

Madame Griselda, songstress, great!
The laurels do entwine thine honored name;
Loud plaudits, thou hast heard reverberate
In many lands, and royalty acclaim.
Thy glorious gift, by God was given;
No music instrument 'neath heaven
Hath such sweet sorcery;
Thine, was not shaped by human hand;
But God and thou have made it grand:
Both praised be.

With noble mien, and graceful ease.
The “woman maestro” doth appear, and lo!
Her outward charms do greatly please.
The strains begin—the lights but dimly glow;
Her 'witching cadence greets the ear;
Behold! the audience, rapt, doth hear,
Delighted by each note:
To move the soul, what power hath song!
Vast numbers—see! weak hearts and strong,
Swayed by one sweet throat.

Thee, songstress! I will not compare
With heavenly lark that sings in air,
Or clings to leafy stem;
Not with the peerless nightingale.
That sings, divine, its lovely tale,—
'Twould, too much, honor them:
With such rapt pleasure, ne'er we hark
To nightingale or heavenly lark;
To make as pensive or as gay.
Bird ne'er was born, that had a way.

Song Sorceress! what power thou hast.
Old memories, in us, to raise!
Once more they surge, as we behold the past;
Once more emotion's dying embers blaze!

Perchance, some lover's shade doth rise,—
Behold the lips, the smile, the eyes!

Their sorcery did one enthrall.
And promise, give, of endless bliss,
Till something, somehow, went amiss,
And ruined all.

Thy strains make us remember,
Perhaps, a tender joy
That, long ago, did perish,—
A sweet without alloy;
Perhaps a secret anguish.
We thought had calloused o'er,
(Which we would ne'er recall, again)
Is made to burn once more.

“Ave Marie,” thou didst sing;
'Twas not so much the song
That caused the happy tears to spring,
As thy voice rose clear and strong;
That caused the heart, in the throat, to swell,
A sweet emotion, upward, well;—
But thy entrancing voice,
And thy success, that cast the spell:
I did rejoice.

One who hath toiled and struggled hard,
Whose character, trials have not marred.
And who hath, victory, won;
Who charms and edifies the mind.
Amuses and uplifts mankind,—
Hath, nobly, done.

But ev'ry song hath ending,
And ev'ry swan must die;
And glory, sometime, must belong
To days that have gone by.
The wreath of fame may wither.
The star of glory, set;

But there is one fresh garland,
Eternal dews will wet:

And thou hast wreathed this garland;
Thy soul it doth adorn,—
It is thy noble womanhood,
'Twill bloom till Judgment Morn.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 55–57.

Sentiment, Humor, Truth and Nonsense

The Lament of a Benedict

Love's a flower on a bramble;
Getting married is a gamble;
Matrimony is joy's essence—if you like an uphill scramble.

Whether you win her or you buy her,
Matrimony is a “flier;”
It's the means of changing many a man into a first-class liar.

It's giving up a score
Just for one whom you adore;
It's testing your digestion,
As, beyond all doubt and question.
You have never, never, never, never tested it before.

It's the end of losing sleep,
Baffled by the mystery, deep.
Of how to win your idol, (who was wild to take the leap!)

It's the end of telling lies
About your idol's eyes;
It's the end of kissing the Blarney stone; its throwing off disguise.

It's disdaining to refuse
Wife, the gold-cure for her “blues;”
It's the end of kneeling at her feet except—to lace her shoes.

It's drinking ginger ale
When you want a stiff cocktail;
It's longing for the freedom that a man enjoys in jail.

It's “Farewell” to flying corks;
It's cleaning knives, spoons, forks;
It's having dreadful visions of a multitude of storks!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 61.

Watertank Station

Have you ever been held captive in a God-saken land,
By Misfortune, Fate or Business, till you scarcely could withstand
Nature's urge to some excitement, maybe, pleasures that are banned?

Ever been a discontented, half-demented prisoner
In a little town called Boreville, where but Gossip is astir.
And where nothing of great moment ever did or will occur?—

Where the natives' chief diversion is to see the trains pass through;
Where the only pretty women who could draw a sigh from you,
All, are in the double harness and, of course, therefore taboo?—

Where life ever in the same old channels evenly does flow;
Where the winds of heaven seldom in a new direction blow;
Where you can't go to the devil, as you have no chance
to go?

Lived in Boreville ten years?—Well, then, when with Death you've kept your date,
And you stand in fear and trembling, knocking at the golden gate,—
Just recall you lived in Boreville and can bear 'most any fate!

And when venerable Peter asks you why you should
pass in.

Mention those ten years in Boreville, and though dark your trail with sin.
When the ghastly truth dawns on him he will surely sigh, "You win!"

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 62.

Don't Heed the Lure of Little Things

When running down a deer,
If small game doth appear,
Don't leave the big buck's trail
To chase a cottontail,
Else, to bring home the venison, you probably will fail.

Observe this rule in life
In searching for a wife;
In business do the same.
Or in pursuit of Fame:—
Don't heed the lure of little things when tracking down "big game."

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 63.

If You're Fighting Like a Trojan

If you're fighting like a Trojan with your back against the wall;
And the odds are all against you, and it seems that you must fall;
And your weather ear is cocked to hear the dreaded
 Final Call;—

If no other way is left you, why, you possibly can “stall,”
And escape at least with some skin, if you can't escape with all.

If Fate has you in the “sweat box,” and it seems you're sweating blood;
And you think how sweet to perish in a fire or a flood,
Or among man-eating crocodiles in Amazonian mud;—
Just sweat and keep on sweating, just suffer, watch and wait;
There is no chance for “stalling,” for you can't fool Fate.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 64.

Toasts of a Cynic

Oh, here's to Love, the nightingale;—
Or, rather, I should say, a whale
That swallows, thus, the dove of peace, nor e'en casts up the tail!

Oh, here's to Love! and, if, by Jove!
You would call love a bird,
Don't call it "lark," don't call it "dove,"
As that is quite absurd:
No bird except the ostrich
Would continue in fine fettle
Upon a daily bill of fare
Composed of "precious metal."

Oh, here's to Fame!—a song bird, sweet,
That sings divinely at one's feet
When one's a peaceful skeleton and can't enjoy the treat.

Here's godspeed to the husband-hunter,
Who's all out of luck;
Oh, may she find a golden goose
Whose feathers she can pluck;
And when she's plucked the feathers
May her nest be so well lined,
That she won't have to search again,
Another goose, to find.

Here's to the beautiful lady!—
Ravishing work of art;
Supreme masterpiece of the tailor;
Pride of the hairdresser's heart;
The skilled dentist's crowning glory;
The painter's last letter in fame;—
Oh, flourish the arts that have made her
Putting crude nature to shame!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 65.

In Quest of a Wife

Long, had our worthy Don Quixote
Lived a lonesome life
In land of sage-brush and coyote,—
Lived without a wife.

“My kingdom for a horse!” once roared
King Richard, brandishing his sword:
Our hero waved his purse and cried,
“My many acres for a bride.”

He’d get a wife by “hook or crook,”—
The lonesome wretch was frantic;
He’d get a wife who’d milk and cook,
And make life romantic.

Bold and persistent was our hero;
Several declared.
His morals were like those of Nero,
But they slightly erred.

He would hasten to the city,
Where his record was unknown;
And, being artful, shrewd and witty.
He would make some girl his own.

When the bold blade reached the city,
His hopes were running high;
That night, in bed, he sang a ditty.
Which was all a lie:—

“I left behind me many girls
Who always liked to kiss me;
They are worth their weight in pearls,
And I am sure they miss me.”

In dance halls he began his quest,
Soon met a charming lady;
Loved her greatly, though he guessed
Her past was somewhat shady.

He recalled romantic days,
Recalled old escapades,

Recalled that his bold, artful ways
Had often charmed young maids.

Reflecting with exquisite pride
That he, the artful sinner,
Usually conquered when he tried,
He thought that he could win her.

They dined together, wined together,
And, at times, 'twas doubtful whether
She could have been more tightly pressed
Against her ardent wooer's breast.

His new love listened to his ravings,
Took the ring when he proposed;
Helped him spend his hard-earned savings,
And when spent,—the romance closed.

The persistent one insisted
That they really were engaged;
Hugged her, too, though she resisted,
And the siren was enraged.

His cheek, the furious beauty smote,
And savage words did issue
From her dev'lish pretty throat,
"I nevermore will kiss you!"
Then the jilted one demanded
That she give him back his ring;
Seized her, and to him, she handed
Willingly, the little thing.

The bachelor has left the city,
Almost empty is his purse;
He does not sing a sweet love ditty,
He can only curse.

Ten double eagles, had our hero,
Paid for that engagement ring;
He's as bloodthirsty as Nero,—
He got back a bogus thing.

The Desert Rat

The shades of eve lengthened. The “desert rat,”
Scowling and growling, wearily sat
On the cold, dusty steps of stone,
In front of a skyscraper, sat there alone.
“An idiot’s caper,” he said with a groan,
“To seek joy in a city where I am unknown.
I’ve stood it a week, and I’m ready to go
Back to the land of coyote and crow.
Got up before daylight—did it from habit—
Chased pleasure each day, but have failed to nab it;
’Tisn’t so hard to run down a jack-rabbit.
I have walked the hard streets till my calves are sore;
I have downed a few drinks and don’t want any more.
I am sick of the stench, the noise and turmoil.
The sights and the lights. Back, back to the soil!
I am going back to my old stamping ground.
Where wind-swept sand dunes and yucca abound;
Where rattlesnakes, buzzards and wild dogs are found.
And it’s better to be
In their company
Than with some of the crooks that you meet and see;—
Coyotes are snarling, but harmless, things;
The rattler gives warning before it stings.
Hats off to coyotes and buzzards and vermin!
Their methods supply a good text for a sermon:—
They’ll not prey upon you till after you’re dead,
And your bones are then worthless to you, be it said.
So back to the realm where Dame Nature is queen;
Where, at night, all the stars in the skies can be seen;
Back to the region where ‘desert rats’ dwell!
I call it God’s country, some call it—oh, well.
The desert, I guess, has me under its spell.

Through the years I have changed to a 'desert rat,'
And, when home again, I will toss up my hat
With a yelp of sheer joy as a 'desert rat' should;
Why, even the carrion, there, will smell good."

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 69.

Speak the Truth, Shame the Devil

Speak the truth, shame the devil, and bravely confess
That you love a sweet kiss and a thrilling caress.
Ah, kiss while you may, before age, the abhored.
Wrinkles your cheek and wrecks beauty, adored,—
Else you may regret opportunities, missed,
When you think of the times when you might have been
 kissed.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 70.

To My Old Girl

Here's future joy to my old girl,
Up-to-date, hard-to-hold girl,
 Who heeded the lure of gold;
 The girl with the heart that grew cold;
 Whom another doth now enfold
 In his good strong arms;
My old girl,
Up-to-date, hard-to-hold girl.
 With the irresistible charms!

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 71.

It Pays to Know

It pays to know just what you know;
When not to give advice;
Which man to trust within your reach;
Which man has not his price.
To know just when to ask yourself
If it is as is said;
To know just when to believe the world
Or believe yourself instead.

It pays to look for virtue's pearls
Before you choose your mate,—
Although, a wealth of ocean's pearls,
You might deem richer bait.

It pays to know that Prince Fat Purse
Who preys upon the poor.
Then gives a mite to charity
In hopes thus to secure
A jeweled crown in paradise,—
Lord!—when he tries to enter,
His hopes will disappear in smoke
Somewhere near Hades' center.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 72.

The Falling Out

Ill-fated falling stars, above!
A luckless lover's falling in love,
Inevitably is checked,
When one's dear idol falls in one's esteem
The shock awakes him from his dream;
His golden hopes are wrecked.

Then comes the lover's falling out
With Cupid, who begins to pout,
And straightway takes to wing;—
But rhymsters never rave about
This dull, prosaic "falling-out,"
So I've no more to sing.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 73.

Lovely Belle of Society

Ah, yes, lovely belle of society.
Sweet creature of goodness and piety!
We know that you love a variety,
And hanker for suitors, galore;
And 'tis in the bounds of propriety
To be blessed with a dozen score:
But oh, lovely creature of piety!
Relieve one poor devil's anxiety,
Make him believe you prefer his society.
Suppress your great love for variety,
(All this will insure his sobriety)
And he will adore you far more.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 74.

Though the Rich Man May Not Enter Heaven

Though the rich man may not enter heaven,
However so hard he may try,
With any more ease than a camel can squeeze
Through some kind of a needle's eye;—

The biblical statement in question
Implies not, that, had he been poor.
He would have to strain less, or meet with success.
Some paupers would not I am sure.

Though the rich who seek entrance to heaven,
May elsewhere be hurried, pellmell.
Be that as it may, 'tis certain I say,
That the poor in this life get hell.

Now, wealth, rightly used, is a blessing.
Poverty oft is a curse;—
Don't remain poor because loath to endure
Damnation, you fear may be worse.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 75.

It Matters Not

It matters not what you once could pay;
Nor how much you squandered along Life's way;-
You're the next thing to nothing, if broke today.

It matters not if the goose once hung high;
And your limit in poker was the sky:—
You can't bank on the past,—no chips will it buy.

It matters not what you were at one time;
Nor how wild your life in your golden prime:—
It's being "all in" that is the crime.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 76.

Do It Again

If you have divided your last, stale crust
With a comrade you honor and love and trust;
If you have lived true to friendship's dear pledge,
Though the sacrifice brought you near the grave's edge
And you meet him years later and he is rich,—
He's in the purple and you're in the ditch;
And he doubly repays you and merits your trust
By giving a whole for that former half crust:—
Why, then, if you'd be a real man among men,
Just save the new crust and divide again.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 77.

Dutchy's Newspaper Venture und Luf Affair

Some time ago I settled here,
In dis pig town ver folks are qveer;
Und I did vun most foolish caper—
Ach! I started vun newspaper!
I published gossip vot vas nice,
While trinking peer, so cool as ice;
Und Gott! I printed her yust twice.
Vy did I chuck her, then, und leave?—
Der reason, any vun can believe:
Der vere so many gossips here,
Ver almost evrytings is qveer—
Alt vimen gossips vot ve fear—
Dot newspaper, she had no sale,—
Der news, pefore I print, vas stale.

I had in town vun luf affair,
Vich gave me vun supreme despair.
Bah! I haf huge revenge to get.
For gossip vot qveered all tings yet;
It qveered dot newspaper so qvick,
It makes me almost drei veeks sick.
I had vun parrot;—dot qveer bird
Talked poetrys vich she vunce heard.
Mein freund, now mit der great Dutch nation,
Gabe dot bird vun education.
He wrote poetics—he was shmart,
Und taught dot bird poetic art;
Und now I tell some secrets,—see?—
'Twas Polly bird vich started me.

I lufed vun girl mit golden hair.
Some vimen here gabe me despair;—
Dey said she vas, mit me, proposed;
Vun man said so,—hees eye vent closed.
Says I, “I vill be her protector,

Teach der peoples to respect her.
It vud gieb her vun great dismay—
To know just vat die vimen say.”

Her hair vas golden like der carrot;
After her, I named dot parrot.

Mein lonesome freund say: "Loan me Polly,
Maybe she vill make me jolly."
I loaned him Polly—Ach, I mean
Die Polly bird, not Polly qveen.
Vun veek he brought back Polly bird;
Py Himmel! Vot vas it I heard!
Dot parrot vas vun holy terror—
She vas vun almighty shwarer!

Dar vas to be vun gala tance;
I jumped at dis, vun lifetime chance.
I took Fraulein, mit golden hair;—
Denk I, venn musics fill die air
I vill implore mein luf affaire.
Ach Gott! Dot vas vun lufely tance!
Fraulein und I vere in lufe's trance;
Ve cuddle close, denn glide und whirl
Ven someone says: "Hello old girl!
 Ho, ho, py Golly,
 Pretty Polly,
 Dutchy lufs you, ho, py golly!"
Dot parrot, perched on vun high rafter
Yelled und shvore und chuckled laughter.
Ach, she vas vun holy terror—
She vas vun almighty shwarer!

All ears vere strained upon der floor;
Vot food for gossip i Out came more:
Dot uphigh, hateful demon yells:
"Dutchy lufs her, ring der bells!
Everybody's telling it,
Heard der Dutchman yelling it."

Und Polly—I mean Polly girl,
Mein rosebud, mein vim priceless pearl,
Down fell in—vat it is?—vun swoon.
I yelled at Polly, "Liar, loon,
You haf alreaty killed her yet;
I break der neck ven you I get!"

“Ho, luf und peer und sauerkraut,
Der Dutchman can not lif mitout,”
Dot green nightmare vas heard to shout.
Mein freund had told dot fiend mit vings,
Mein confidence—told everytings.

I vas disgraced, und Fraulein, too
She vas mit me forever thru!
She denk I taught mein bird dot stuff,
Und ’tvas no use to tell mein luf.
Mein freund had qveered all tings, py Golly!
Py der gossips mit dot Polly.

First published in *At Lucifer’s Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 78–80.

Poems of Youth

Lines to Shelley

Hail, hail to thee, great poet!
Thou who wert borne amain.
On Inspiration's wings,
To some empyreal plain,
And, on mankind, didst priceless treasures rain.

Drowned in the lake you loved,
Drowned in Geneva Lake;
Oh, you who stirred mankind,
And truths, immortal, spake.
Did disappear as though a mere snow-flake.

Thy poor wave-lashed remains
At length, were dashed ashore;
And soon, Pisa's sand,
 on
Cremated was thy corse:
Thy early doom, the world will e'er deplore.

Deplorable it is
That oft, the truly great,—
The ones that help mankind.
Are early claimed by Fate,
While many knaves and fools, too long, must wait.

Thine ashes have their tomb
In Rome, eternal Rome;
But in the heart of man
Thy poetry hath home:
It lives, thou perished in Geneva's foam.

Great poet, "Heart of hearts!"
I seem to know thee well;
Though we did never meet,
A friend, in me, doth dwell:
I know thyself, if not thy earthly shell.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 85.

June

Sweet morn in June! The verdant world
Is one bird-haunted wilderness
Of blossoms, leaves,—all dew-impearled.
Which perfume-laden winds caress.

Day's ball of fire, mounting higher,
Flashes forth its glorious beams
From a sky of deep sapphire.
And floods a wond'rous land of dreams.

The bird sings loud its happy song,
And courts its mate; the time of love
It is, and gold-winged bees now throng;
Creation sings, below,—above:—

The breezes murmur through the grass;
The earth one happy song doth raise;
The unseen stars high o'er us pass,
And, to the maker, sing their praise.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 86.

The Lily

The lily swings her snowy bells;
For Christ's departure, still, she grieves
She droops, as holy grief compels,
While dewy tears gleam on her leaves:
Her silv'ry bells, as they slowly swing,
Would chime a hymn, could they but ring.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 87.

To a Dead Rosebush

My Climbing Rose! high didst thou wind
O'er leafy porch, and spreadest 'round
Thy limbs, with golden vines entwined;—
Thy leaves lie withered on the ground.

My rosebush! when thou wert in bloom,
Ev'ry breeze, that near thee sped.
Thou didst enrich with sweet perfume;
But, now, alas, my bush thou'rt dead!

Mournful music, now, I hear
Whispering through thy branches, bare;
E'en the breezes held thee dear:
Good night sweet bush, good night fore'er!

When roses and green leaves adorned
My sweet rosebush, birds nested there;
But by these sweet-winged joys 'tis scorned,
Now, that it's desolate and bare.

And, so, a life, not beautified
With any love, is bare and bleak;
And sweet joys can not, there abide;
It is a thing, they do not seek.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 88.

The Robin's Courtship

A songster, blithe, sat in a tree,
"Tis mating season, dear," sang he,
It was a robin on a limb;
A glorious song was sung by him.

A robin maid, a lovely thing.
Delighted, heard her wooer sing;
And hoped his tuneful eloquence
Expressed the truth and not pretense.

As sweet desire in her woke.
She tried by manner to invoke
More ardor, and he plead the more;
How sweet to hear the male implore!

Oh, how he praised that lovely form.
That brilliant breast, that heart so warm,
Her modesty, her sweet birdhood;—
She was the best in all the wood.

"Oh, be my mate! Thou art my choice,
And that 'tis so thou shouldst rejoice;
My treatment will be always tender;—
Dearest queen, please, please surrender!"

But, being wooed did so entrance her
That she still withheld her answer;
His courting, she would fain prolong,
So thrilled she was, by love's sweet song.

"Oh, robin, dear! I'll give thee rest
By keeping warm the eggs in nest;
I'll find the food, and will not ask
My robin-love to do that task.

"And ev'ry morn at break of day
I'll sing to thee a roundelay;
And many pleasures will be thine,
My dearest one, if thou'll be mine.

"My love is genuine, intense;
Now, kindly end my great suspense!

Will we be mates? Do answer, 'Yes,'
Else you will wreck my happiness!"

Her answer came melodiously:
"Oh, Rob, I know 'twas mean of me
To keep you guessing, but, my dear.
Your sweet appeals, I loved to hear.

"I believe your eloquent, sweet tongue
Did not deceive, else heart were wrung.
My heart, your strains did penetrate;
Yes, dearest, I will be your mate."

A rustle! but they hear no sound,—
Their thoughts are high above the ground.
Again, an ominous, slight noise.
And now appear two cruel boys.

A barrel, bright, is seen to flash,—
Oh, lovers, lovers, why so rash?
Oh, can't you see?—Awake, take heed!
Oh your pure hearts will surely bleed.

There, hurry, fly! Ah, birds, alack!
A cruel smile, and then a crack;
A piteous sound, and then—a thud,
A twitching form is in the mud.

He gasps, he pants, he writhes in pain.
Nor can he breathe a dying strain,—
A last adieu to her on high.
Who sees her lover writhe and die.

A lone bird sits, bedazed with grief;
That he is dead—too sad for belief!
Oh, future joys,—a phantom's kiss!
Death and woe instead of bliss!

She gazes at that breast of red,—

Her heart is broken, she is dead.
She falls into the life blood of
Her robin-mate, her red-breast love.

First published in *At Lucifer's Portals and Other Verses*. Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1917, pp. 89–91.

Post-Book Verse

Stage II | The wartime afterlife, 1918

One securely attributed poem published during Bachtell's Signal Corps training.

The Yank Behind the Gun

By Private Paul B. Bachtell, O. A. C. Training Detachment, National Army

You may talk of booze that's crazin',
And that brings the soul's downfall;
And of all-around hell raisin',
An' while them's not things I'm praisin',
Yet they always don't spoil all.
Now there's Jim, a fighting Yankee who heard loud his country's call.
When he joined he was a snortin'
Down-an'-outer, but still sportin'
One who'd known life's ups an' downs an' rotten stench.
Wan't my pal till he got potted,—
Found him when blood was clotted,
In a shell-hole, of a night, afore our trench,
An' says he, this fightin' Yankee,
Hard o' looks an' long an' lanky,
An' a dead game bird who fought the bloody Hun,—
Fought his damndest for Old Glory,
Thought he'd never live in story,
Fought his fight, and fought it gory,
Says this dashin', slashin', smashin', crashin' Yank behind the gun;—

"Pal, I'll mighty soon be bustin',
Bustin' into Kingdom Come!
But it's better, soon an' trustin'
Than to live a drunken, lustin'
Good-for-nothing slackin' bum;—
Better head in for the breakers to the roll of Duty's drum . . .
Now, I sort o' wish I'm sartin,
That you'd be so good in partin'
As to sort o' try to fix me in your mind,
Givin' me the old once over,
An' I'd sort o' die in clover,
Feelin' that I'd left a knowin' friend behind,
Just remember I'm a Yankee,
Hard o' looks, an' long an' lanky,
An' a dead game bird that fought the bloody Hun,
Fought my damndest for Old Glory,
Though I'll never live in story,

Fought my fight and fought it gory,
Just a dashin', slashin', smashin', crashin' Yank behind the gun!"

Well, my heart was rather smartin'
When he made his big demise,
An' with death-pills 'round us dartin' —
Well, I sort o' sobbed in partin' —
While Fate rolled its roarin' dice.
And I saw but Heaven's splendor,
Sir, an' not a trace o' vice,
As he smiled an' swore a trifle,
An' reached feebly for his rifle
While the everlasting shells filled space with din,
An' still smiled his twisted smile, sir,
An' just sank to sleep the while, sir,
While the universe was bustin' up with sin.
But I gloried for my Yankee,
Hard o' looks an' long an' lanky,
An' a dead game bird who fought the bloody Hun;
Fought his damndest for Old Glory,
Though he'd never live in story,
Fought his fight an' fought it gory,
Just a dashin', slashin', smashin', crashin' Yank behind the gun.

First published in the *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, July 30, 1918, p. 2.

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