

# Behind a QUATTEAU PICTURE

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Kenneth Macgowan

To Ken & Eddy and Joan  
From Ted and Bobby and  
Desirée

Christmas, 1918



**BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE**







The opening scene in "BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE" as produced at the  
Greenwich Village Theatre.

Left to right: Harold Meltzer, Margaret Fareleigh and Everett Glass.



# Behind a Watteau Picture

A Fantasy in Verse, in One Act

By

ROBERT EMMONS ROGERS

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WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1918



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*To My Wife*  
**MARIE BAER ROGERS**

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# Behind a Watteau Picture

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## CHARACTERS

A MUSEUM GUIDE.

A WATTEAU MARQUISE.

A WATTEAU MARQUIS.

A WATTEAU POET.

THE MELANCHOLY PIERROT.

HARLEQUIN.

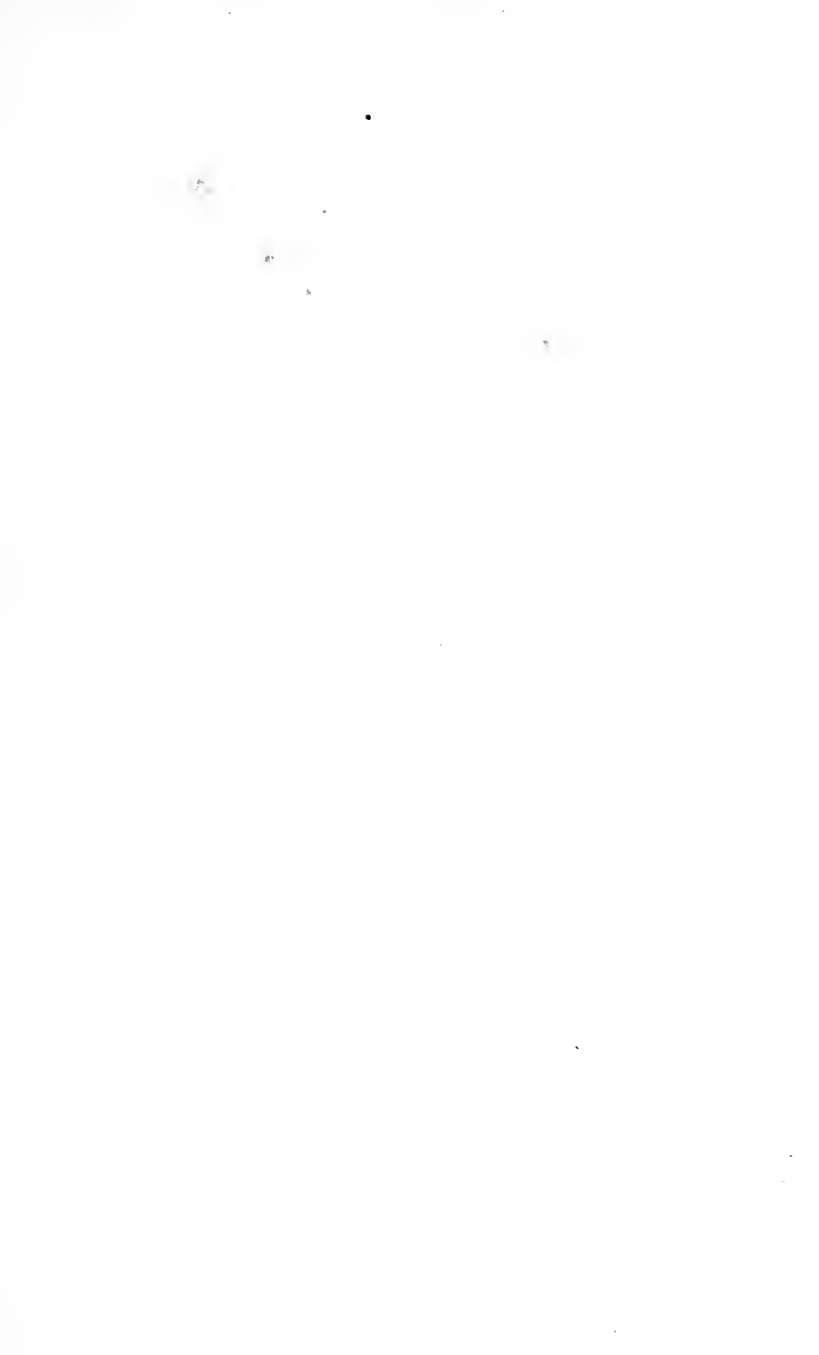
COLUMBINE.

A FAT PIERROT.

FOUR CHINESE LANTERN BEARERS.

TWO NEGRO GRAVE-DIGGERS.

TWO LUTANISTS.



## Notes for Amateur Producers

*Behind a Watteau Picture* was first given by amateurs of The Artists' Guild of St. Louis under the direction of David Carb, in November, 1916.

The first professional production was by Frank Conroy, at the Greenwich Village Theatre, New York City, in November, 1917. The fantasy was on the opening bill of the theatre and ran for seven weeks, with scenery by Hewlett and Basing and special music by W. Franke Harling.

Although the New York production was elaborate, the success of the first attempt at St. Louis proved conclusively that the piece can be given by amateurs on a restricted stage. A few suggestions may be helpful.

The same setting, gateway and sky, may be used for both scenes. The first scene is set far forward and enclosed in a large gilt frame. On the lowering of the lights at the end of Scene 1, the picture frame disappears and the gateway with its sky drop is moved to the back of the stage where, with the smaller set scenery and properties, it does for the rest of the play. The play closes on Pierrot's song without the change back to the picture indicated in the text.

Scenery and costumes need not be expensive but should approximate in color and shade the pastel twilight tones of a Watteau picture. The Watteau characters should wear the costumes of his pictures; the Pierrot group, their traditional clothes; Chinese and Negroes should be brilliant and bizarre in the new manner.

Both productions have used an intermittent musical obligato. Mr. Harling's music, written for a string quartette, may be procured on application to Mr. Conroy. Societies making a less elaborate production will doubtless prefer the device used in St. Louis, a thoroughly competent pianist improvising according to the action. Characteristic themes for character and action, taken from well-known composers of repute, may be worked out during rehearsal. The verses for the duel-minuet were written to the music of Jupiter's Minuet in the last scene of Offenbach's *Orpheus Aux Enfers*.

The spirit of the play should be that of poetic fantasy rather than melodrama. Players should be chosen for their grace and ease and particularly for their ability to speak rhymed verse skillfully. Care should be taken not to strive for "naturalness" at the expense of cadence and rhyme. Beauty of diction, of grouping, of color and lighting . . . these are the essentials.

R. E. R.



(Bill of the original professional performance)

The Greenwich Village Theatre  
Fourth Street and Seventh Avenue, New York

*BILL OF THE PLAYS*

**BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE**

*A Fantasy in Two Scenes by Robert E. Rogers, with  
Incidental Music by W. Franke Harling*

A GUIDE	- - - -	Mr. Eugene Ward
A WATTEAU MARQUISE	-	Miss Margaret Fareleigh
A WATTEAU MARQUIS	- - - -	Mr. Meltzer
A WATTEAU POET	- - - -	Mr. Everett Glass
A FAT PIERROT	- - - -	Mr. Strawbridge
HARLEQUIN	- - - -	Mr. Macaulay
FIRST LANTERN BEARER	- -	Mr. Remo Bufano
SECOND LANTERN BEARER	- -	Mr. McDonald
THIRD LANTERN BEARER	-	Mr. David Pennington
FOURTH LANTERN BEARER	-	Mr. Leonard Brooke
FIRST GRAVE DIGGER	- - - -	Mr. Lapham
SECOND GRAVE DIGGER	- - - -	Mr. George Weston
COLUMBINE	- - - -	Miss Fania Marinoff
A MELANCHOLY PIERROT	- -	Mr. Sydney Carlyle

The piece has been staged by Mr. Conroy. The settings have been designed by Messrs. Hewlett and Basing, and executed at the Hewlett-Basing Studios. The costumes have been designed by Mr. Robert E. Locher.

**THE FESTIVAL OF BACCHUS**

*A Comedy in One Act by Arthur Schnitzler  
Translated by Charles Henry Meltzer*

"The Festival of Bacchus" has been staged under the direction of Mr. Roland Young. The setting is by Messrs. Hewlett and Basing.

**EFFICIENCY**

*A Play in One Act by Robert H. Davis and  
Perley Poore Sheehan*

"Efficiency" has been staged by Mr. Conroy. The setting has been designed by Mr. John Wenger and executed by Messrs. Hewlett and Basing.

## PLEASE NOTICE

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# Behind a Watteau Picture

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## SCENE I

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*A shallow front scene with back drop, the whole set in a great gilt picture frame, as if it were a painting. Four figures, the Watteau people, are posed before a rather high wall, in the center of which is a great, double, gilt-grilled gate, of fantastic pattern. At right and left, on this side of the wall, two tall, slim, black cypresses. Over the wall, to the left center, the upper branches of a peach tree. The wall is gray and mossy. Above, an emerald-green sky . . . all very flat and unreal, as if painted. The figures are posed stiff and still. They are all in the loose silk frills and ruffles of Watteau's paintings. The Marquise sits on a little folded stool, right center, lax, head in hand. The Marquis, half kneeling, to her right, is kissing her hand. At the other side the Poet, lounging*

[ 1 ]

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*at her feet, fingering a guitar. At far right a little turbaned negro with lap dog. The whole effect should be that of one of those languid arrangements of Watteau's.*

*From the left comes a typical Museum Guide in gray uniform, with a pointer. He repeats in a rapid, professional monotone:*

### *Guide.*

The next picture in the collection,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Is one of the masterpieces  
Of the French School of the Bood-war  
Entitled  
“ La Markeese Ong-wee-ay ” . . .  
In English, “ The Bored Markeese.”  
Painted in 1709  
By Jhong Ant-wong Watto.  
At the express command of  
Madame de Montespan  
Mistress of Looey Katorze,  
For the Palace of Versales.  
Please note the chiaroscuro,  
The mastery of color and  
The fineness of the brush-work. . . .

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Also, the bored expression on the lady's face,

Considered very fine

By the late John Ruskin.

It is worth \$75,000

And is a companion piece to

"The Lovesick Peer-ro"

In the Loover, Paris, France.

*He moves toward the right.*

The next picture in the collection . . .

*Exit. The music rises high and shrill  
in derision, drowning his voice.  
Around the edge of the picture, to  
the left, creeps Harlequin, spangled  
and black visored. He passes in  
front of picture, laughs, waves his  
bat at it thrice, then follows Guide  
out, leaping mockingly. At once  
the figures in the painting begin to  
move, and the orchestra takes up  
the tune to which the Poet is sing-  
ing.*

*Poet.*

There is a garden where

Love lies beneath the moon,

[ 3 ]

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Golden and rose and fair,  
Love . . . in a swoon.  
Lads full of hardihood,  
Flee when you hear her call.  
Love bringeth nought of good  
Over Death's wall.

*The Poet lays down his guitar.*

*Lady.*

"Love bringeth nought of good  
Over Death's wall."  
How very fine that is . . . how true!

*Poet.*

'Twas but a song I made for you,  
Tender as twilight, sweet as your grace. . . .  
Lady, to look upon your face  
Were more than song or poetry.

*Marquis.*

To kiss your hand were song enough for me.

*Lady.*

I am so weary of these days  
And these long nights. . . .  
Have you no antic plays,  
No maskings or delights

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

To make me laugh again?  
No human tongue or pen  
Can tell how all the whole wide world  
Wearies me . . . wearies me!

*Poet.*

I have another song to sing,  
Ballade of Ladies Loved and Dead,  
Sweet rhymes unto sweet music wed.

*Lady.*

I pray you, do not sing.

*Marquis.*

Or shall we improvise a play  
A merry garden comedy?  
You shall be soubrette, Lady . . . we  
Clowns, and make mummery.

*Lady.*

Ah, no . . . no songs nor plays shall ever  
woo me,  
For I am weary of all common play. . . .  
Have you no novelties to offer to me,  
Who hate the sight of day?

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Have you no heart to go adventuring,  
Under the stars to go  
Seeking the other-worldly magic thing  
Few men may know?

*Poet.*

Lady, lead on . . . and we will run  
Over the hills of yesterday  
On to the mountains of the moon,  
The valleys of the sun,  
Land where midnight reigns at noon. . . .  
Tally-ho . . . lead away, lead away!

*Lady.*

*Slowly.*

There is no magic far away  
Stronger than magic now and here.  
This ancient wall might hide the kingdoms of  
Cathay,  
This quaint and crooked gate  
That creaks so near  
Might bar us out of fairylands that wait  
Adventurers whose hearts are gay  
And debonair.

*The Poet goes and peers in, shaking his head.*



## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Poet.*

Alas, no, Lady, nought within,  
Save an old garden, old and thin,  
Ungathered roses,  
Poplars dying,  
A stagnant pool in star-shine lying . . .  
There are all that the gate encloses.

*The Marquis is obviously impatient.*

*Marquis.*

Come away, Lady. . . . We can sing and  
feast . . .  
Dance, if you will,  
Or play at cards at least.  
The evening is young still.

*Poet.*

*Not heeding.*

Who knows, Marquise, but you are right?  
That here beyond this wall . . .  
Hidden from sight  
But quick to answer should we call . . .  
Lie all romance and magic, life and death,  
Adventure. . . . In a breath,  
All you desire, who are sick of all,  
Say . . . shall I call?

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*She makes an eager gesture of assent. The Poet looks in.*

Sleeping garden . . . arise, look out!

Wake in the star-shine, wake and stir . . .

There are adventurers hereabout.

Wake . . . O wake . . . for a sight of  
Her!

(Hark! did you hear the fountain stir?)

Night-blooms, open! Nightingale, sing!

(Was that the poplar whispering?)

Sleepy folk, drowsy folk, couched within,

Open the gate . . . we would come in!

*Pause. Then a sudden scurry of guitar music, as if wind-borne. As the four look at each other, suddenly at the gate appears a Columbine, a slim and lovely child all rose and gold, pressed against the bars, stretching her arms through in entreaty. To her comes the visored Harlequin . . . tears her from the gate and drags her out of sight. The guitars sound more loudly, then die away.*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Poet.

*Eagerly.*

Here is Romance for us, Lady. What ho!

Open . . . open, and let us in.

*Although the Marquis tries to dissuade her, the Lady goes to the gate and pulls the bell-chain which sounds inside, cracked and jangling. At sound of bell, enter from right—not inside the wall but outside—a very fat Pierrot, all in white, with big green umbrella and a market basket on his arm. He lumbers in with a queer, dancing gait, regardless of the four who draw back and gaze in astonishment at him; puts a big key in the gate, and swings it open. Dusk within. As he is about to go in, the Marquise speaks to him and he whirls about like a frightened rabbit.*

Lady.

Pray, ere you close it,

May we go in for a moment . . . and look?

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Fat Pierrot.*

'Tis not my garden. I am the cook.

*Lady.*

Just one look, then, if nobody knows it.

*Fat Pierrot.*

You will not like it there.

Inside 'tis not a pretty place.

Only a garden, all deserted . . . bare . . .

Neglected for a long, long space.

I'm not the master . . . I'm the cook.

I dare not let you venture in.

*Marquis,*

*Practically.*

But here is gold

To sweeten your sin.

Let us but look.

Do as you're told.

Only a glimpse, cook . . .

Look at him grin!

*Fat Pierrot.*

*In great perturbation.*

'Tisn't my garden. It is very queer.

Strange people wander here. . . .

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Even in moonlight it is sad and old.  
Strange people dwell within. . . .

*Marquis.*

Let us but look.

*Lady.*

Do as you're told.

*Poet.*

Only a glimpse, cook . . .  
Look at him grin!

*Fat Pierrot.*

Well . . . just a moment then . . . but  
never say

I didn't warn you . . .  
'Tis a deadly place!

*Marquis.*

*Melodramatically.*

Fat cook, we scorn you!

*Lady.*

Did you see his face?

*Poet.*

Lady, the gate stands wide.  
Dare you to lead the way?

*Takes her hand.*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Lady.*

*Awed.*

This is a strange and magic gate  
We venture past  
Into this garden where Dusk holds her state.  
Hold fast my hand. Hold fast!  
Creep softly, breathless with delight  
Like daring children. Come . . .  
Hold tight . . . hold tight!

*The four creep in with exaggerated caution and are lost in the dusk. The Negro Boy looks in once, then picks up his guitar and lap-dog and runs off rapidly, right. The Cook Pierrot, with despairing wagging gestures, follows in fatly.*

### SCENE II

*The wall fades in darkness. When it lifts we are inside the garden. The other side of the wall is at the back, with the gate toward the left. One of the cypresses is seen over the wall in the right hand back corner. The other is missing. At the right one goes up*

[ 12 ]

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*some low broad steps to a terrace out of sight; at the foot the steps are flanked by gray, crumbling, moss-covered classic statues. At the left the garden-wall, out of sight, is masked by thick high rose-bushes in bloom. In front of them facing the terrace is a long low curving stone seat on a raised step of stone. Toward left center a peach tree trained against the wall makes against the flat green evening sky a delicate, not too thick, silhouette of twig and leaf, somehow formal and unreal. On the right above the wall the open sky is seen. Under this clear space a few steps, unobtrusive, go up the wall-side to its flat top. There is ivy on the wall. Rather luxuriant and neglected shrubs and flowers are about and a weather-worn statue or two of soft stone. To right and back of center, almost under the wall, is a half finished grave with earth thrown up about it. All is in a green dusk. There has been no pause in the music. As the light goes on the four file in through the gate, one after another, but hand in hand, at a quickening pace. The Lady, who is leading,*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*moves faster and faster and in a circle, until she finally has them all in a sort of ring around a rosy. Just inside the gate the Fat Pierrot stands unquiet and peering off right with scared face.*

*Lady.*

To-night we are children . . .  
Gayest of children,  
Dancing, dancing  
In an old Garden . . .  
Round and round and round!

*The Men.*

*Rapidly.*

Round and round and round and round,  
Ring around a rosy!

*Suddenly the Lady breaks away and the dance stops abruptly, all staring at her. She looks about nervously.*

*Poet.*

What is the matter? Why are you pale?

*Lady.*

This is no place to dance, my dears!  
This is a strange, strange corner of the world,  
No place to dance. . . .



## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Poet.*

There is a sudden wind from the gate,  
Blowing me cold.

*Lady.*

Cold . . . and afraid.  
Shut the gate, shut the gate,  
Then we will dance again.

*The Poet pushes the gate together violently.*

*Fat Pierrot.*

Softly . . . softly . . .  
Lest the gate creak!

*Marquis,*

*Looking about idly.*

What a strange garden,  
Deserted and old.

*Poet.*

The world passes by and forgets it.

*Fat Pierrot.*

Your pardon!  
But pray do not speak  
Over a whisper, or we are all lost!

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Lady.*

Poor garden! Where the wind seems always cold  
And age-old cypresses keep their watch.  
The walls are gray and green with mould. . . .

*Poet.*

The very roses droop as if with frost. . . .  
Brr! I'm cold, too!

*Marquis.*

And I!

*Poet.*

It is a chill  
That creeps into the heart and makes it still.

*Lady.*

True! So I feel it in *my* heart.

*Fat Pierrot.*

Now you have seen it . . . pray depart.  
Go quickly. Here it is not well.

*Marquis.*

What a strange story might this tell!  
This garden, made for moonshine and delight,  
For lutes and lovers . . . on a summer  
night . . .  
Now left so empty and so spiritless.

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Lady.*

It seems profane to come here in this dress,  
In these gay frills, this frou-frou of soft silk.

*Poet.*

*Inspired.*

This is a garden of the forgotten past . . .  
Shadows, shadows everywhere  
Of little ladies who were fair,  
Whose beauty might not last.

*Lady.*

*Catching up the thought in the same pensive  
mood.*

Here, under moonshine . . . oh, so white . . .  
Their lovers wooed them tenderly,  
Begging them to requite  
Their hot young passions. Can you see? . . .  
Here, there, beneath the wall,  
Beside the fountain and the pool  
Blown into spray by night winds cool,  
Can you not see their shadows pass and flee?  
Can you not hear their false, light voices call?

*Poet.*

Shade of each gallant boy and maid,  
Provoking girls and girls afraid . . .

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

And girls whose hot hearts risked their all  
For one night of such gallantry.  
This is a garden of dead happiness,  
Of vanished love and folly, where the moon  
Peers in o' nights . . . wistful . . . regret-  
ful. . . . Soon  
Veiling her face . . . to see the emptiness  
Of dead youth wooing to a dead flute's tune.

*Lady.*

Let us go back!

*Marquis.*

It might be well to go.

*To Fat Pierrot.*

My man, who lives here? I should like to know.

*Fat Pierrot.*

I'll tell you . . . if you haste and leave.

*Poet.*

Tell me! The place intrigues me so!

*Fat Pierrot.*

*Looking about fearfully.*

A strange, strange master! I believe  
He's called the Melancholy Pierrot,

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

With strange deep eyes and lips all worn and thin,  
He dwells alone. Here no one enters in,  
Save whom he bids . . . and he bids no one.

*Lady.*

It was a foolish thing to venture through  
That rusting gateway . . . even for a lark.

*Marquis.*

We are two men, Madame, to guard you.

*Poet.*

*Suddenly.*

Hark!  
Did I hear music . . . like a lover's lute?  
And are those torches, too?

*Fat Pierrot.*

Torches! For God's sake, then, be mute!

*Lady.*

*Looking out toward the right as the others  
do.*

I thought it was the orange moon  
Rising strangely by the pond.  
Nay, it comes toward us . . . and beyond

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Another . . . and another still . . .  
Four moons all round and red,  
Lifting as if they climbed a little hill,  
And one bobs on ahead.

*Fat Pierrot.*

Too late, too late . . . you cannot flee . . .  
Hide . . . hide! . . .

*Poet.*

Why, I cannot see . . .

*Marquis.*

*Haughtily.*

Gentlemen do not hide.

*Fat Pierrot.*

For her sake . . . for the Lady's sake!  
Behind here, quick, crouch side by side.  
Speak not at what you see . . .  
You do not know what strangeness you may wake.

*Poet.*

The orange moons float by the silver pool . . .



Left to right: Edwin Strawbridge, Harold Meltzer, Margaret Fareleigh and Everett Glass of the Greenwich Village Theatre Company.



Fania Marinoff, as Columbine, and Sidney Carlisle, as The Melancholy Pierrot, in the final tableau at the Greenwich Village Theatre.





## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Marquis.*

I have my sword.

*Fat Pierrot.*

O, fool, fool, fool!

For your own sake, Lady, bid them run,

Or we are all undone!

*The Lady, really badly frightened,  
tries to pass it off and at the same  
time to get the men moving, with a  
pretense of sport.*

*Lady.*

I know . . . I know!

'Tis like a children's game.

Here I go

Hidden behind the roses high . . .

You do the same . . .

Bend down low,

Waiting until they call "I spy."

*They imitate her, laughing, and crouch  
behind the bushes, singing in an ex-  
aggeration of caution.*

*Poet.*

Under the roses' shadow then,

One fair lady, two brave men,

Waiting what danger comes anigh . . .

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Marquis.*

Silent keep,

Do not peep,

Waiting until they call "I spy!"

*The Fat Pierrot runs hastily to the gate, closes it, picks up basket and umbrella and stands visibly shaking. From the right, down the steps, comes the spangled, black-visored Harlequin, followed by four Chinese in startling robes, each bearing on a tall bamboo stick a large round paper lantern of a deep blood-orange color. The Fat Pierrot tries to creep past.*

*Harlequin.*

*His voice is deep and harsh.*

Halt!

You're late, my fat friend, very late.

We waited till the hour was past,

Yet no sign at the gate.

Have you the shroud?

*The Fat Pierrot takes cover off the basket, mutely.*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

At last!

Go, bid the diggers come . . . and tell  
Dear little Columbine to prepare,  
To dress her for . . . what she knows well,  
And say that moonrise must behold her . . . here.

*The Fat Pierrot hurries out, right, like  
a scared jelly. In a moment, down  
the steps, come marching four  
tremendous Negroes, naked to the  
waist and swathed below in some  
gaudy cloth, a curved scimeter  
hanging from each one's broad sash,  
turbans on their heads, gold hoops  
in their ears, barefooted. They  
carry spades and mattocks.*

*Harlequin.*

Dig . . . but not too deep.  
She who will sleep  
Is very little, very frail and slim.  
To dig so deep were grim  
Sardonic jest.  
Dig . . . while I summon *him*.  
Dig . . . without rest.

[ 23 ]

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*He goes out with his lithe, stealthy  
and altogether sinister gait. The  
Negroes fall to digging, the Chinese  
standing about them, lighting their  
work. The four peep from behind  
the roses, full of disquiet.*

*Lady.*

*Softly.*

What dreadful thing is this? . . .  
These black and Oriental men . . .  
That spangled thing whose speech was like a hiss  
Of some gay, deadly snake?

*Marquis.*

Bend close and wait . . . and then  
Watch well what grave they make,  
What vengeance they will take.

*They watch in silence. The Negroes  
dig. Presently the Chinese, watch-  
ing their swaying lanterns, begin to  
sing in strange, quavering, Oriental  
intervals.*

*Chinese.*

We are the Bearers of the Lantern,  
We are the Bearers of the Moon,  
On our slender willow wands

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Poised aloft

Float the moons . . .

Orange, tawny, golden moons . . .

Like an apple stolen from Eden,

Like a bubble . . .

Like a bubble blown of sunset,

Floating, floating . . .

Like a tarnished Roman coin

That bore once the head of Cæsar . . .

Like the children's Toy Balloon . . .

We are the Bearers of the Moon.

*Lady.*

I am afraid!

*Marquis.*

Be silent. . . . Wait.

*And now the Negroes, swaying slowly  
at their digging, give labored and  
guttural answer.*

*Negroes.*

Dig . . . dig . . . dig . . .

This is not our moon that rises.

Our moon pours through the trees of Congo,

Black and gold . . . black and gold

For the Voodoo sacrifice.

Dig . . . dig. . . .

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

### *Chinese.*

When there is no moon in heaven  
We are the Makers of Moons.

### *First Chinese.*

This is the moon of the East  
Flat and carven and white.

### *Second Chinese.*

This is the moon of the North  
Cold with the Northern night.

### *Third Chinese.*

This is the moon of the golden South  
Rich and swollen with delight.

### *Fourth Chinese.*

This is the moon of the West  
Where the wheat ripens under its ruddy light.

### *All four Chinese.*

When there is no moon in heaven,  
These we fashion in her image.  
We are the Makers of Moons.

### *Lady.*

I am afraid . . . afraid!

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

### *Negroes.*

Ours is a moon of wailing,  
Wailing and blood . . .  
Ours is the moon of Voodoo,  
The red moon . . .  
The red moon of the black folk . . .  
Wailing and blood.

### *Chinese.*

We are the Bearers of the Lantern,  
We are the Bearers of the Moon,  
Till she rise lotus-like and mellow,  
Till she rise . . . soon.  
These be the four moons of the garden,  
Moons that our own hands have made,  
Ours is a fairer moon than God's moon,  
Ours will not fade.

*Behind the roses the Poet replies in a hushed  
voice.*

### *Poet.*

These are the Bearers of the Lantern,  
These are the Bearers of the Moon,  
Hasten the true moon upon us,  
Hasten her . . . soon.

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Lady.*

These are the dead moons of the garden,  
Moons their unclean hands have made.  
Their moons are evil beside God's moon,  
I am afraid . . . afraid!

*The Chinese turn to the Negroes.*

*Chinese.*

Is the grave made?

*Negroes.*

Not yet is the grave made.

*Chinese.*

Dig, then . . . we watch.

*A moment's pause. Then, from the right, down the steps, comes Columbine, running,—her pretty ballet dress rumpled, her hair once bound up with rosebuds falling on her shoulders. She runs to the locked gate and shakes the bars, showing despair. All her movements suggest the art of the ballerina.*



## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Columbine.*

*Sobbing.*

Open . . . open!

Gates, iron gates, that will not open . . .

Moon, cruel moon, that soon must rise,

Have you no pity for me here, who grope

Against your bars? And must your saffron eyes

Behold me slain? . . .

*The Fat Pierrot, greatly perturbed, runs on after her, and in pantomime, always in pantomime hereafter, tries to get her away from the gate and out. His gestures are abjectly comic and she pays no attention to him. She turns from the gate and stands with her back against it, with outflung arms.*

Because my laughter in the sunny hours

Awoke sweet echoes in this dying place . . .

Because I strove with love against the powers

Who fill this garden-close with death . . .

Because my very face

Was beautiful and young,

So will they try to stop my singing breath

And kill the songs I have not sung.

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*The Fat Pierrot makes another attempt, in vain. Seeing the Lady's head peeping around the rose-hedge, he waggles his hand despairingly at her, as if begging her to do something. She calls to the girl, who has hidden her face on her arm.*

*Lady.*

Columbine!

*The Men.*

*Softly.*

Columbine . . . Columbine!

*She turns in astonishment. The Lady's voice goes on.*

*Lady.*

Here where the roses lift and twine,  
Here in shadowy rose-flowers hidden . . .  
Here we will hide you . . .

*Columbine.*

*Astonished.*

'Tis forbidden . . .

*Marquis.*

Here are swords to guard you well.

*Poet.*

Here are shadows that never tell.

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Lady.*

Columbine, Columbine, hide with us here,  
Waiting means danger. . . . Columbine, dear!

*She is on the point of running behind the rose-hedge when the lutes sound loudly and very near, and Harlequin appears on the steps. Columbine throws out her hands despairingly, and falls with a moan on the bench in front of the roses—on her back—long slim legs lax, one hand flung over her face, as if she had fainted.*

*Behind Harlequin as he descends the steps are four boys who might have stepped out of some early Italian painting—slender, blonde-curved, in sheath-tight hose and doublet of flame color, with impertinent little caps on the back of the head. They carry round-bellied lutes which they pluck without ceasing, but with regard to what happens. Sometimes a faint accompaniment to speech and action, sometimes suddenly loud and arresting in a dead pause.*

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## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Behind them comes slowly the Melancholy Pierrot, a tall, thin, white-faced thing in the usual loose clothes of a Pierrot, but fashioned of a deep purple crepe with blood-red rosettes on coat and shoes. His wide ruff is black; so is his skull cap. His white-washed face is very drawn and lean,—with hollow dark eyes and a sardonic slash of scarlet for a mouth. A tiny guitar is slung round his neck by a broad ribbon,—usually he carries it at his back so as not to be in the way. He is very absent and moody and languid.*

*Harlequin.*

Master, behold, the grave is made,  
The lanterns wait, the lutanists are set,  
The girl is shrouded . . .  
All is ready here.

*Pierrot.*

*Not hearing.*

The mist lies over pool and glade

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Like some veiled face I knew once . . . and  
forget . . .

The sky should not be clouded . . .

*Suddenly.*

What do we here?

*Harlequin.*

Master, you know.

*Pierrot.*

The sky is very clear.

There is no moon.

*Harlequin.*

The moon is very late.

*Pierrot.*

*Angrily.*

I bade you have a moon!

*Harlequin.*

*Soothingly.*

Soon . . . soon . . . but wait.

Or . . . here are little moonlets at your hand.

*Pierrot.*

The stars are ready and the trees stand fast,

The water in the fountain springs aghast,

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

The rose blooms will be faithful to the last. . . .  
Shall the moon make me wait . . . when I  
command?

*Harlequin.*

Master, the moon is slow to-night.

*He makes a sign to the Chinese to show their  
moons.*

*Chinese.*

We are the Bearers of the Lantern,  
We are the Bearers of the Moon,  
Can one moon pour a larger light  
Than our red bubbles in the dark?

*Pierrot.*

I bade the moon! The moon is late . . .  
then hark!

*In a rage he scatters the Chinese, faces the wall  
and sky and stands with arms outstretched.*

Lady of dark thought and of darker deed.  
Mistress of shadows and of cruel seas,  
Huntress among the timid Pleiades,  
Come . . . in our need.

*Chinese.*

White moon, golden moon, moon red as fire,  
Race across the seas to us,  
Give us our desire.

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Pierrot.*

Mistress of this garden-close,  
To whose light the fountains leap,  
In the dark the roses sleep,  
Come . . . and wake the rose.

*Negroes.*

Red moon, golden moon, moon white as flame,  
Moon of Congo forests . . . come  
By thy dreadful name!

*Pierrot.*

Pilgrim of a lonely way,  
To our garden swinging low,  
For a while delay the dreadful day,  
Come . . . to Pierrot!

*At the words the moon appears over the garden wall, a deep ruddy gold in color, a man's height in diameter. It rises till it seems to poise on the top of the wall like a bubble, then stops and remains fixed till the end. Its left quarter shines through the delicate lace-work of the peach foliage. As it rises slowly the*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Chinese prostrate themselves and  
their little moons.*

*Chinese.*

We are the Bearers of the Lantern,  
*She* is the true, the very moon,  
Like a golden bubble floating . . . float-  
ing . . .

Go not too soon!

*Pause while Pierrot looks pensively at the moon.*

*Pierrot.*

The moon is young and sweet to-night,  
Hung on the night's blue vine  
Like some great fruit of rose and gold,  
Young and sweet . . . rose and gold . . .  
Passionate . . . like Columbine.

*With a sudden start of remembrance.*

Columbine . . . where is Columbine?

Bring her to me!

Ah, if the moon were gray and cold,

Like a woman veiled and old,

Ah, if the moon were wan and white . . .

So might I spare her . . . for to-night.

Bring her to me!



## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Harlequin.*

There she lies. Let her come forth.  
She knows the way that she must go,  
Since she mocked at Pierrot,  
Fragile . . . little worth!

*Pierrot crosses to where Columbine  
lies lax on the bench, her face  
hidden, and bends over her with  
yearning hands.*

*Pierrot.*

Fragile . . . but oh, so sweet!  
How can I kill? . . .  
Columbine dear,  
See, it is moonrise . . . see, at your feet,  
Once more kneeling . . . Pierrot's here!

*Wildly.*

Strangle that white, young throat . . . and  
still  
Her song like a bird's at daybreak?  
Columbine, loveliest . . . wake!

*Harlequin, who has been watching  
angrily, crosses and lays his hand  
heavily on his master's shoulder.*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Harlequin.*

No, Pierrot.

Have you forgotten?

Rose and gold, sweet to the taste,

Like a sweet apple, mellow . . . and rotten,

Worms at the heart, decaying within,

Sweet, . . . yes, sweet . . . sweet, as  
sin!

Lovely to pluck . . . bitter to taste.

*Pierrot.*

*Sadly.*

Lovely to pluck . . . bitter to taste.

*Harlequin.*

No, Pierrot!

Have you forgotten?

False to the heart,

Wanton and light as a bird

In its flight,

Your mistress, my mistress, lover of any

Lad whom she meets . . .

Can she be lovely, allowing so many

To taste of her sweets?

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Pierrot.*

*Dully.*

Allowing so many to taste of her sweets.

But sweet . . . yes, sweet?

*Harlequin.*

No, Pierrot!

Can you forget?

How she deceives you,

Fools you and leaves you

Without a regret,

Slips from your covers to kiss with new lovers,

And she believes . . .

She . . . can . . . fool . . . you yet!

*Pierrot flings him off in a burst of passion.*

*Pierrot.*

Be still . . . you spangled, spying thing!

Look, she is suffering.

*He raises her very gently in his arms.*

*Her eyes uncloset and search his*

*adoring ones, then she smiles a*

*very satisfied, cat-a-cornered smile.*

*Pierrot kneels by her, as she leans*

*back lazily, fondling her hands.*

*She does not respond at all.*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Sweet . . . sweet!  
Lift me from kneeling at your feet,  
Laugh in my eyes . . . give me your mouth  
For my lips are faint with drouth.

*To Harlequin.*

Fill in the grave . . . and softly go from  
sight.  
She shall not die to-night,  
But this moonrise  
Shall shine upon a garden of delight.  
Oh, see how every blossom lies,  
Open and fragrant for our happiness . . .  
Dear, dear child,  
Lay your cool fingers in caress  
Upon my mouth. Pierrot is reconciled!

*Pause for a moment, while Columbine  
makes sure of what is in his eyes.  
Then she laughs, deliberately, un-  
twines his arms from about her  
waist, rises, looks down scornfully  
at the wonder and adoration in his  
eyes, then, with utmost care and art  
begins to dance, with a most in-*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*solent step around him, snapping  
her fingers like castanets.*

*Columbine.*

Oh . . . oh . . . poor Pierrot,  
All in black  
Like a melancholy crow. . . .  
You must dress in rose and gold  
When you come a-wooing me,  
Paint your face that grows too old,  
Or you're not for me . . . la-la!

*Pierrot.*

Columbine!

*Columbine:*

*Smiling in his face.*

Kill me if you can,  
Am I not too fair?  
Let your spangled man  
Kill me if he dare.

*With languor.*

In the moonlight Pierrot's aflame . . .  
The moon perchance or I perchance to blame . . .

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Pierrot will die unless I kinder grow,  
So kiss me . . . Pierrot.

*She stoops her face to his, her arms  
round his neck. He crushes her to  
him with a groan.*

*Pierrot.*

Sweet . . . sweet!

*Columbine.*

*She holds her cheek close to his.*

You will not kill me now?

Kiss me again . . .

You cannot still me now.

Am I safe again?

*He lets his arms fall loosely from her;  
his eyes stare at her dully, as if he  
did not understand. She rises and  
stands over him, sparkling, tri-  
umphant.*

So, Pierrot,

Too beautiful, too beautiful to die?

*Joyously.*

Love hangs too high for Death to gather in,

Love lives eternally, sweeter than sin,

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Love kisses once and goes laughing on her way,  
Love leaves the lips she knows for new lips every  
day,

Love feeds on fresh desire, ever to warm her,  
Lovers fade . . . but love can never tire . . .  
Death cannot harm her.

*And goes off again in her shameless,  
tiptoe dance round Pierrot, who  
stares blindly in front of him.*

So . . . so . . . Master Pierrot,  
Kiss me once and . . . let me go.

You have given me your pardon,  
You shall watch me dance o' nights,  
Joyous all across your garden,  
Seeking new delights.

You shall see me luring lovers old and lovers new,  
If *your* passion is enduring . . .  
Passion pity you!

*He rises as if horror-struck to an-  
swer her as she again sings her  
song in praise of love.*

Love hangs too high  
For Death to gather in,  
Love lives eternally  
Sweeter than sin;

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Love feeds on fresh desire  
Ever to warm her,  
Lovers fade but Love can never tire,  
Death cannot harm her.

*Pierrot.*

Love is too kind  
Ever to blame me,  
Love has no cruel mind  
Always to shame me ;  
If this be Love in truth . . .  
Not her betrayer !  
Passion dies, but Love is very youth . . .  
Death cannot slay her.

*At the end Columbine laughs and approaches too fondly one of the boyish pages. Pierrot passes his hand across his eyes as if waking from a bad dream, and never taking his eyes off her, motions to Harlequin.*

Harlequin! . . .  
She is not Love,  
So light Love could not grow  
My heart is dead from her.



## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Columbine.*

Oh, poor Pierrot!

*Pierrot.*

*In the same low, die-away voice.*

The shadows whisper and the moon is still,  
None lifts a voice for her. . . .

*Loudly.*

Harlequin . . . do your will.

*Harlequin.*

Bind her. The grave is ready.

*The Negroes move forward. Columbine suddenly awakes to her danger, shrieks, tries to hide among the page-boys but they push her away. She turns at last to Pierrot, confident, but he has wandered over to the steps and stands with an elbow on the balustrade, picking at his little guitar, sunk in apathy.*

*Columbine.*

Pierrot . . . Pierrot!

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Harlequin.*

*Terribly.*

Bind her.

And lay her there.

*Just as the Negroes are about to seize her, she shrieks again. From the rose-hedge the Lady runs to her side and enfolds her. Before her appear the two men with drawn swords.*

*Lady.*

Here are swords, Columbine.

They will not dare.

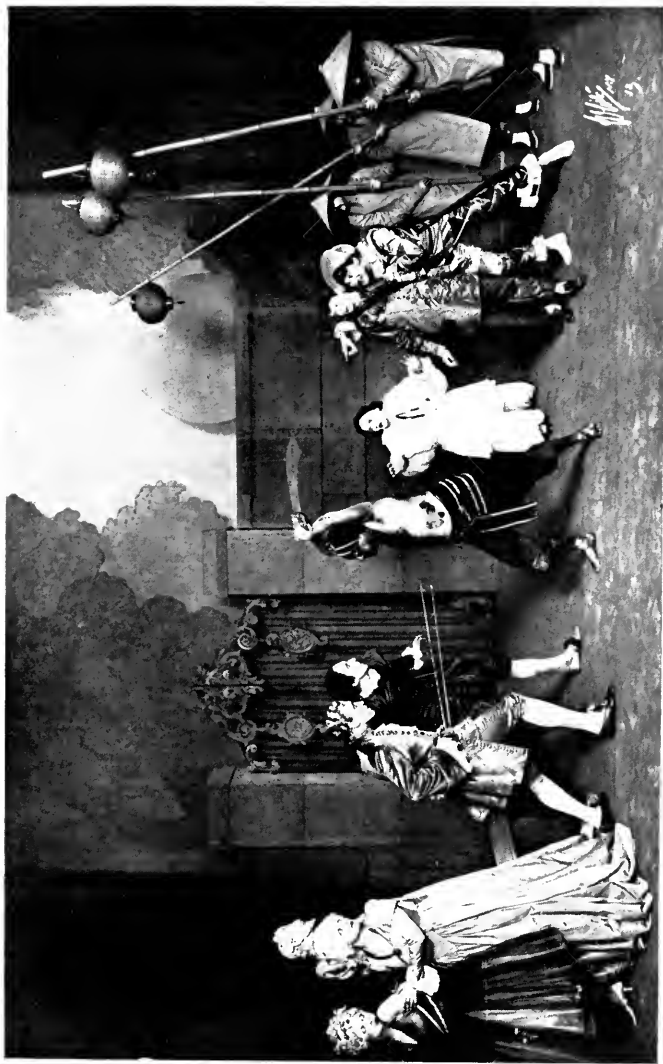
*The Negroes recoil, Harlequin throws out his hands fiercely.*

*Harlequin.*

Foes in the garden! . . .

Slay . . . slay!

*The Negroes advance with drawn scimeters, but suddenly Pierrot strikes a peremptory chord on his guitar and the swords drop. Pierrot comes down the steps and crosses to the strangers, and looks them over rather wearily, incurious.*



Left to right: Fania Marinoff, Margaret Fareleigh, Harold Meltzer, Everett Glass, Hal Lapham, Edwin Strawbridge, Sidney Carlisle, Joseph Macauley, Remo Bufano, David Pennington and David Brooke, of the Greenwich Village Theatre Company.



## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Pierrot.*

Why do you come here . . .  
Is it dull outside?  
This is a dull and weary garden here.  
From year to silent year  
None comes inside.  
Who told you stories of the sad Pierrot?  
Now you have seen me . . . go.

*. Harlequin.*

Open the gate, fat friend, and drive them hence,  
Then you and I, fat friend,  
Shall settle *your* recompense.

*The Fat Pierrot melts visibly with  
terror. The Negroes advance again  
to take Columbine who, safe among  
the swords, smiles unendurably at  
Harlequin. The Lady waves the  
Negroes back.*

*Lady.*

Nay . . . you shall not!  
Think you to do your wicked will  
Here in this deadly spot  
Where all is chill . . .  
And humankind forgot?

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Columbine goes with us . . . we are not  
afraid.

You shall not kill the maid.

*Marquis.*

Not while a sword is mine  
To guard Columbine.

*Pierrot looks from Columbine, full of  
indecent triumph, to the earnest  
three and smiles, very gently and  
sadly. But Harlequin does not take  
it so calmly.*

*Harlequin.*

So soon? Has she bewitched you too?  
She is a cold and heartless thing  
For all her loveliness,  
Her pretty wantoning . . .  
She holds men's hearts in sick duress,  
You know not what you do!

*Poet.*

She is a lovely thing in evil stead,  
Too lovely to lie dead  
Under this strange moonshine. . .

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Nay, she shall lift her sunny head  
Far from these walls . . . and laugh!

*Harlequin.*

*Grimly.*

Her lips like wine  
Make drunken those who quaff.  
Give her to us to kill.

*Pierrot.*

*Breaking his absent silence at last.*

The moon is silent ever . . . gives no sign.  
These men are young and foolish in their youth.  
Think ye she will have ruth  
Upon them . . . Columbine?  
Loose her . . . let her have her will.

*Upon his sign the Negroes retire and  
the Fat Pierrot smiling throws aside  
the gate. Then Pierrot retires to  
the steps, right, to watch the sport.  
Harlequin glowers by the grave.  
Columbine is most effusive, but  
makes no move to go, and one can  
see from her smile and the way  
she eyes the men that she intends  
to have a good time. The men*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*warm rapidly to her. The Lady, at first kind and protecting, as the scene progresses grows doubtful, distrustful, hostile, and finally afraid of Columbine.*

*Columbine.*

O gallant hearts, friends mine,  
Columbine loves you! . . .

*Lady.*

See, the gate is wide!  
Let us go quickly.

*Columbine.*

No, no . . . shall we not bide  
A little, little while  
And mock this melancholy thing in black,  
Who wears such sorry smile?  
Shall we not dance and laugh upon his lack,  
Dance, dance, . . . and smile?

*Pierrot.*

*As Columbine coquets outrageously, ballet-fashion.*

O moon, behold, the play begins apace!  
Shine, moon . . . sound lutes. . . .  
Now that lovely face,



## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

That mouth whose speech is sweet as silver flutes,  
Shall breathe a madness in this quiet place. . . .  
Laugh, lutes and viols,  
Dance, dear sorcery!

*Lady.*

*Uneasily.*

I am afraid. Let's go home . . . soon.

*Marquis.*

Not till we dance. Mistress, a boon!  
Dance first with me.

*Poet.*

Nay, with me, sweet.

*Marquis.*

No, 'tis I have the lighter feet!

*Poet.*

Dance with me. . . . Dance with me. . . .

*Marquis.*

Choose you the stronger.

*Poet.*

Pouf! He will tire . . . I can dance longer.

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## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Lady.*

Let us go home. . . . I am afraid,

*Columbine.*

*Scornfully.*

Poor, frightened maid!

*With a bright idea.*

Whom shall I dance with?

Him I shall kiss.

*She pirouettes to the Marquis and kisses him  
lightly.*

*Marquis.*

*Madly.*

Kiss me again.

*Leaving, she kisses the Poet twice, watching  
the Marquis over her shoulder.*

*Columbine.*

Like this. . . . Like this?

Pity should any one miss! . . . . So this!

Whom shall I dance with . . . . come, decide!

*The Men.*

Me she kissed best.

She dances with me . . . . with me. . . .

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Columbine.*

*To both.*

One only dances with me.  
Does your pride  
Suffer this braggart so to brawl?  
Dance with me quickly . . . or not at all.

*Lady.*

*Wildly.*

O evil of the world,  
Passion, whose other name is death!  
Come away, come away. . . .  
Leave this dancing girl . . . I am afraid.

*Poet.*

My lips are drunken with the kiss of her,  
My arms are aching for her body sweet. . . .

*Marquis.*

Yea, though deathwards go our feet,  
Yet I shall dance with her.

*Columbine.*

No one . . . save one . . . shall dance  
with me to-night.

Choose, choose, my masters!

*Suddenly the Marquis draws his sword angrily.*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Marquis.*

Lo, my right  
To choose her . . . flashes in my hand!  
*The Poet draws also. Pierrot's voice rings  
from the steps.*

*Pierrot.*

Now, do you understand?  
Lady, beware. . . .

*Lady.*

*Flinging herself between the men.*

No, no. . . . You will not dare  
To fight, to perish for that painted thing!  
Put up your swords. Will you kill me, too?  
Have you no pity for my suffering? . . . A-a-ah!  
*The Marquis has pushed her so  
violently to one side that she swoons  
on the bench, hiding her head.  
Columbine circles eagerly around  
the tense men, clapping her hands.*

*Columbine.*

How splendid . . . thus to woo  
With blades bright in the moon,  
Fight for me . . . while I dance.  
You shall have music while your swords glance.

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*She kisses each of them passionately.*

A kiss for you . . . for each of you.

Who will live to love me yet

After this bloody minuet?

*She springs away, clapping her hands.*

*The lutanists strike up a rather stately minuet, Columbine swaying and gesturing in her place to the music, while the Marquis and the Poet take their stand. From the steps Pierrot sings softly in time to the music.*

*Pierrot.*

'Tis a pretty dance they dance,  
Columbine!

'Tis a quaint and pretty measure.  
See how brightly their blades glance,  
Columbine!

Dancing for your sorry pleasure.

*The Chinese, Negroes and lutanists take up  
the strain.*

See, the moon is glowing red,  
And the night holds her breath,  
Soon the earth shall be their bed . . .  
For these dance with Death!

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*As the men salute, Columbine holds out her hand to Pierrot.*

*Columbine.*

Sad Pierrot, let us dance, too!

*Pierrot.*

*Descending to her, taking her hand with a cold smile.*

Fitting that I should dance with you

While men are dying! . . . Sirs, engage.

*The lutes strike; the men cross swords and fight, while Columbine and Pierrot move through the minuet,—the attendants singing as before. This time it breaks off toward the end with a jangling chord as the Poet drives the Marquis through the heart and receives the other's blade near the same place.*

*Marquis.*

Antoinette!

*He dies.*

*Lady.*

Love!

*She staggers to the body and falls.*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Columbine.*

*Bends over Poet writhing on the grass,  
pointing to the other two carelessly.*

Dead!

Now . . . we can dance, I and you.

*Poet.*

Nay . . . I shall dance no more.

I, too, shall die.

Yet fortunate, if you . . . sweetheart . . .  
are by.

Pillow my fallen head upon your breast. . . .

Kiss me again . . . till I forget the rest.

Remembering the best . . .

That for sweet Love I die.

*But Pierrot, standing over him sorrowfully,  
shakes his head.*

*Pierrot.*

Fair sir, lift up your eyes and see

This is not Love.

Love is a kind thing, Love is true . . .

Love was not meant for you,

But this false fair . . . this painted, rosy  
thing . . .

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

This golden sham who . . . to your sorrow-  
ing . . .  
Kissed you with lips of dust,  
Quickened your blood to lust . . .  
So die you now . . . as die you must . . .  
For Passion's cruelty.

*Poet.*

*Feebly.*

Nay, it is Love . . . her face is close and  
dear,  
Love, are you here . . . are you here?  
Your arms are warm, your breast  
Like a soft, sleepy nest. . . .

*Suddenly.*

I cannot see the moon now for the dark.  
Bend your dear face close and closer, Love,  
Kiss me again . . .  
Columbine . . . Columbine . . . Love!

*He dies. The lutes jangle into dis-  
cord again. Pierrot looks down for  
a time at the body. But Columbine  
disengages herself with a gesture of  
distaste; touches the body lightly*



## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*with her slipper, and walks away,  
swinging her hips, humming her  
earlier melody.*

*Columbine.*

Oh! Oh! . . . See, Pierrot,  
Two pretty gentlemen  
Lying in a row,  
Each crying for the moon,  
Each wanting . . . mine,  
Oh, happy gentlemen,  
Poor Columbine!

*Pierrot.*

*With a terrible gesture.*

Be silent!

*Columbine wanders right, and poses  
in an attitude of graceful dejection  
against the base of a marble. Pier-  
rot goes to the Lady and lifts her  
gently from her husband's body and  
supports her.*

Dear Lady, rise

And do not sorrow so. . . .

Look not upon me with such staring eyes.

Once . . . a long time past . . . I bade  
you go.

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*Lady.*

Where may I go  
Now that I am . . . alone?

*Pierrot.*

Harlequin here shall lead you back to life,  
Safe . . . safe home.  
Harlequin! lead her tenderly  
Home through the empty streets and still,  
Sing to her, magic her with song until  
She can forget all this fantastic past  
And sleep . . . at last.

*Lady.*

*Pointing, as her eyes fall on Columbine,  
bitterly.*

She lives . . . and so I shall not lay my curse  
On you and on this garden.

*Pierrot.*

*Understanding, with a hopeless shrug of the  
shoulders.*

Nay, 'twere worse  
To leave her here with me than bury me  
Under the wall. . . .

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## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

We two in this garden  
All the deadly years  
Must love and hate, with laughter and with tears,  
Dying, yet never free of life, but she  
Forever mine and ever . . . Columbine!

*Lady.*

And you? It is my right to know.

*Pierrot.*

I . . . am the Melancholy Pierrot.  
Some call *her* Light-o-Love, false as breath,  
Some call me . . . Death.

*Lady.*

*Shivering.*

Farewell! Your smile is cold upon my heart.

*Pierrot.*

Harlequin!

*Harlequin puts his arm around the  
drooping Lady and leads her slowly  
out of the gate. The lutes are  
sorrowful. Pierrot looks about,  
stretching forth anguished hands.*

So depart

All true and lovely life from this retreat!

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*In a monotone.*

How ugly those are . . . dead. Take up  
their feet

And bury them!

*The Negroes drag the bodies roughly across the  
grass and dump them into the open grave.*

Lock the gate, fat friend. . . . No, you need  
not wait.

Go! . . . all of you.

*He flings his hands out in dismissal.*

*The Fat Pierrot, who has been hid-  
ing behind the bushes, creeps out,  
locks the gate and scurries away,  
his legs bending under him. The  
Negroes shoulder their spades and  
mattocks and shuffle out. But the  
Chinese go as they came, singing  
slowly under their lanterns, the  
lutanists following, accompanying  
them, till both strumming and  
chanting die away, beyond on the  
right.*

*Chinese.*

We are the Makers of Madness,

We are the Makers of Moons,

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

Like a rosy bubble floating,  
Like a poison, magic bubble,  
That men grow mad to look on . . .  
We are the Makers of Madness . . .  
Makers of Moons.

*Columbine turns away from the  
marble, looks keenly at Pierrot, but  
he meets her gaze with folded arms  
and wry smile; so she goes with  
dragging feet toward the gate.*

*Columbine.*

*Shaking the gate wildly.*

The gate is locked!

Let me out . . . out . . . , out!

*Pierrot.*

*Smiling coldly.*

To kill more men, no doubt.

No, you bide here

To comfort *me* with your red smiles, my dear.

And when you long for amorous company,

You may kiss . . . me.

*He turns his back on her and climbs  
up the steps along the wall, right*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*back. Presently he appears, sitting on the top of the wall, a thin black figure, with chin bent down on his knees, brooding. He is silhouetted sharply against the perfect golden disk of the moon.*

*Below Columbine peers through the grille in the gate, calling to any chance passer-by.*

### *Columbine.*

Will no one hear me,  
Columbine singing,  
Poor, sweet Columbine? . . .  
I have love to give,  
Kisses and delight . . .  
Open, lads . . . and let me live  
Free among you in the streets at night.  
Can you not hear me call  
Behind the wall?

*Trying for her old careless, insolent manner.*

Love feeds on fresh desire  
Ever to warm her,  
Lovers fail but Love can never tire. . . .

*She breaks down, sobbing, her body*

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*writhing against the grille. On the top of the wall, Pierrot strikes a few mournful chords on his little guitar, and with face raised to the moon, sings the melody the Poet sang outside the wall.*

*Pierrot.*

There is a garden where  
Love lies beneath the moon.  
Golden and rose and fair,  
Love . . . in a swoon.  
Lads full of hardihood,  
Flee when you hear her call,  
Love bringeth nought of good  
Over Death's wall.

*In another, a minor key.*

O sorry hearts of dust!  
Love sings a tawdry lie,  
Passion, her name, and Lust  
When you come nigh. . . .  
You whom she slayeth soon  
Love will not pardon,  
Love dwells beyond the moon . . .  
Not in Death's garden.

## BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE

*During the last lines the moon and other lights die out. When they leap up again, we see the Watteau group posed motionless as at the opening, outside the wall. But . . . from over the wall, behind the picture, we hear the last bars of Pierrot's bitter little song.*

THE CURTAIN FALLS









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