

# LUSTRA

EZRA POUND

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C. K. OGDEN

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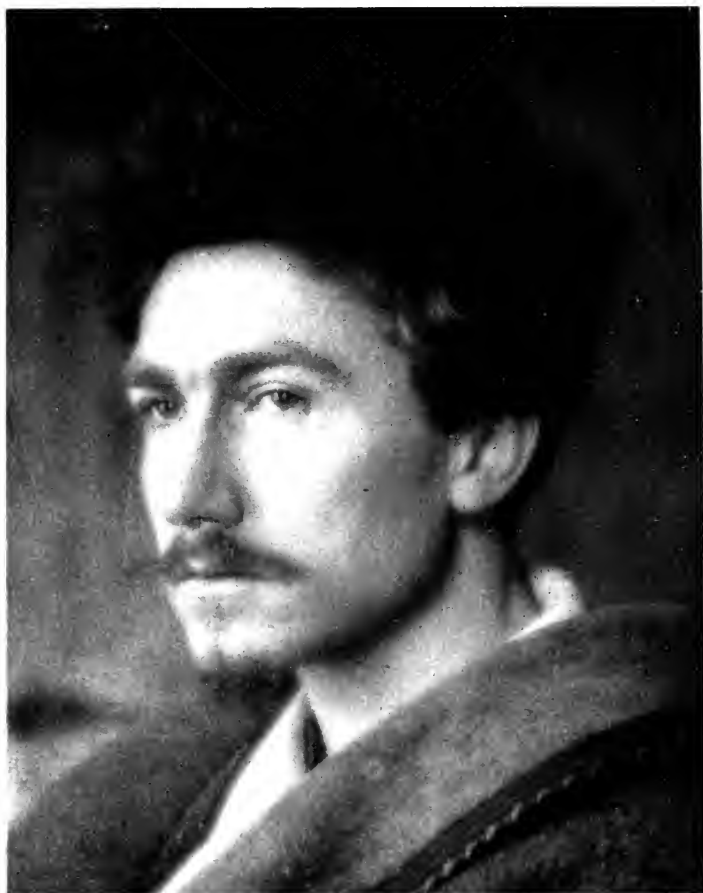


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LUSTRA OF EZRA POUND







*from the portrait by Allen Tungen Tombs*

EZRA POUND.



# LUSTRA

OF

EZRA POUND

*Definition*—"LUSTRUM : an offering for the sins of the whole people, made by the censors at the expiration of their five years of office."

*Elementary Latin Dictionary of Charlton T. Lewis.*

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, CORK STREET

M CM XVI

CERTAIN of these poems have appeared in *Poetry*,  
*Blast*, *Poetry and Drama*, *Smart Set*, and *Others*,  
to the editors of which magazines the author  
wishes to make due acknowledgment.

E. P.

V. L.

*Cui dono lepidum novum libellum.*



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# LUSTRA OF EZRA POUND

## Tenzone

WILL people accept them ?  
    (i.e. these songs).

As a timorous wench from a centaur  
    (or a centurion),  
Already they flee, howling in terror.

Will they be touched with the verisimilitudes ?  
    Their virgin stupidity is untemptable.  
I beg you, my friendly critics,  
Do not set about to procure me an audience.

I mate with my free kind upon the crags ;  
    the hidden recesses  
Have heard the echo of my heels,  
    in the cool light,  
    in the darkness.

## The Condolence

*A mis soledades voy,  
De mis soledades vengo,  
Porque por andar conmigo  
Mi bastan mis pensamientos.*

Lope de Vega.

O MY fellow sufferers, songs of my youth,  
A lot of asses praise you because you are "virile,"  
We, you, I! We are "Red Bloods"!  
Imagine it, my fellow sufferers—  
Our maleness lifts us out of the ruck,  
Who'd have foreseen it?

O my fellow sufferers, we went out under the  
trees,  
We were in especial bored with male stupidity.  
We went forth gathering delicate thoughts,  
Our "*fantastikon*" delighted to serve us.  
We were not exasperated with women,  
for the female is ductile.

And now you hear what is said to us:  
We are compared to that sort of person  
Who wanders about announcing his sex  
As if he had just discovered it.  
Let us leave this matter, my songs,  
and return to that which concerns us.



## The Garret

COME let us pity those who are better off than  
we are.

Come, my friend, and remember  
that the rich have butlers and no friends,  
And we have friends and no butlers.

Come let us pity the married and the unmarried.

Dawn enters with little feet  
like a gilded Pavlova,  
And I am near my desire.  
Nor has life in it aught better  
Than this hour of clear coolness,  
the hour of waking together.

## The Garden

*En robe de parade.*  
Samain.

LIKE a skein of loose silk blown against a wall  
She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington  
Gardens,  
And she is dying piece-meal  
of a sort of emotional anæmia.

And round about there is a rabble  
Of the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the  
very poor.  
They shall inherit the earth.

In her is the end of breeding.  
Her boredom is exquisite and excessive.  
She would like someone to speak to her,  
And is almost afraid that I  
will commit that indiscretion.

## Ortus

How have I laboured ?  
How have I not laboured  
To bring her soul to birth,  
To give these elements a name and a centre !

She is beautiful as the sunlight, and as fluid.  
She has no name, and no place.  
How have I laboured to bring her soul into  
separation ;  
To give her a name and her being !

Surely you are bound and entwined,  
You are mingled with the elements unborn ;  
I have loved a stream and a shadow.

I beseech you enter your life.  
I beseech you learn to say " I "  
When I question you :  
For you are no part, but a whole ;  
No portion, but a being.

## Salutation

O GENERATION of the thoroughly smug  
and thoroughly uncomfortable,  
I have seen fishermen picnicking in the sun,  
I have seen them with untidy families,  
I have seen their smiles full of teeth  
and heard ungainly laughter.

And I am happier than you are,  
And they were happier than I am ;  
And the fish swim in the lake  
and do not even own clothing.

## The Spring

CYDONIAN spring with her attendant train,  
Maelids and water-girls,  
Stepping beneath a boisterous wind from Thrace,  
Throughout this sylvan place  
Spreads the bright tips,  
And every vine-stock is  
Clad in new brilliancies.

And wild desire

Falls like black lightning.  
O bewildered heart,  
Though every branch have back what last year  
lost,  
She, who moved here amid the cyclamen,  
Moves only now a clinging tenuous ghost.

## Albâtre

THIS lady in the white bath-robe which she calls  
a peignoir  
Is, for the time being, the mistress of my friend,  
And the delicate white feet of her little white  
dog  
Are not more delicate than she is,  
Nor would Gautier himself have despised their  
contrasts in whiteness  
As she sits in the great chair  
Between the two indolent candles.

## Causa

I JOIN these words for four people,  
Some others may overhear them,  
O world, I am sorry for you,  
You do not know these four people.

## A Pact

I MAKE a pact with you, Walt Whitman—  
I have detested you long enough.  
I come to you as a grown child  
Who has had a pig-headed father ;  
I am old enough now to make friends.  
It was you that broke the new wood,  
Now is a time for carving.  
We have one sap and one root—  
Let there be commerce between us.

## Surgit Fama

THERE is a truce among the gods,  
Korè is seen in the North  
Skirting the blue-gray sea  
In gilded and russet mantle.

The corn has again its mother and she, Leuconoë,  
That failed never women,  
Fails not the earth now.

The tricksome Hermes is here ;  
He moves behind me  
Eager to catch my words,  
Eager to spread them with rumour ;  
To set upon them his change  
Crafty and subtle ;  
To alter them to his purpose ;  
But do thou speak true, even to the letter :

“Once more in Delos, once more is the altar  
a-quiver.

Once more is the chant heard.  
Once more are the never abandoned gardens  
Full of gossip and old tales.”



## Preference

It is true that you say the gods are more use to  
you than fairies,  
But for all that I have seen you  
    on a high, white, noble horse,  
Like some strange queen in a story.

It is odd that you should be covered with long  
robes

    and trailing tendrils and flowers ;

It is odd that you should be changing your face  
    and resembling some other woman to  
    plague me ;

It is odd that you should be hiding yourself  
In the cloud of beautiful women who do not  
concern me.

And I, who follow every seed-leaf upon the wind ?  
You will say that I deserve this.

## Dance Figure

*For the Marriage in Cana of Galilee*

DARK eyed,  
O woman of my dreams,  
Ivory sandaled,  
There is none like thee among the dancers,  
None with swift feet.

I have not found thee in the tents,  
In the broken darkness.  
I have not found thee at the well-head  
Among the women with pitchers.

Thine arms are as a young sapling under the  
bark ;  
Thy face as a river with lights.

White as an almond are thy shoulders ;  
As new almonds stripped from the husk.

They guard thee not with eunuchs ;  
Not with bars of copper.

## DANCE FIGURE

Gilt turquoise and silver are in the place of thy  
rest.

A brown robe, with threads of gold woven in  
patterns,

hast thou gathered about thee,

O Nathat-Ikanaie, "Tree-at-the-river."

As a rillet among the sedge are thy hands upon  
me ;

Thy fingers a frosted stream.

Thy maidens are white like pebbles ;

Their music about thee !

There is none like thee among the dancers ;

None with swift feet.

## April

*Nympharum membra disjecta.*

THREE spirits came to me  
And drew me apart  
To where the olive boughs  
Lay stripped upon the ground :  
Pale carnage beneath bright mist.

## Gentildonna

SHE passed and left no quiver in the veins, who  
now  
Moving among the trees, and clinging  
in the air she severed,  
Fanning the grass she walked on then, endures :  
Grey olive leaves beneath a rain-cold sky.

## The Rest

O HELPLESS few in my country,  
O remnant enslaved !

Artists broken against her,  
A-stray, lost in the villages,  
Mistrusted, spoken-against,

Lovers of beauty, starved,  
Thwarted with systems,  
Helpless against the control ;

You who can not wear yourselves out  
By persisting to successes,  
You who can only speak,  
Who can not steel yourselves into reiteration ;

You of the finer sense,  
Broken against false knowledge,  
You who can know at first hand,  
Hated, shut in, mistrusted :

Take thought :  
I have weathered the storm,  
I have beaten out my exile.

## Les Millwin

THE little Millwins attend the Russian Ballet.  
The mauve and greenish souls of the little  
Millwins  
Were seen lying along the upper seats  
Like so many unused boas.

The turbulent and undisciplined host of art  
students—

The rigorous deputation from “Slade”—  
Was before them.

With arms exalted, with fore-arms  
Crossed in great futuristic X's, the art students  
Exulted, they beheld the splendours of *Cleopatra*.

And the little Millwins beheld these things;  
With their large and anæmic eyes they looked  
out upon this configuration.

Let us therefore mention the fact,  
For it seems to us worthy of record.

## Further Instructions

COME, my songs, let us express our baser passions,  
Let us express our envy of the man with a steady  
job

and no worry about the future.

You are very idle, my songs.

I fear you will come to a bad end.

You stand about in the streets,

You loiter at the corners and bus-stops

You do next to nothing at all.

You do not even express our inner nobilities,

You will come to a very bad end.

And I ?

I have gone half cracked,

I have talked to you so much that

I almost see you about me,

Insolent little beasts, shameless, devoid of  
clothing !

But you, newest song of the lot,

You are not old enough to have done much  
mischief,

I will get you a green coat out of China

With dragons worked upon it,

I will get you the scarlet silk trousers

From the statue of the infant Christ at Santa  
Maria Novella,

Lest they say we are lacking in taste,

Or that there is no caste in this family.

## A Song of the Degrees

### I

REST me with Chinese colours,  
For I think the glass is evil.

### II

The wind moves above the wheat—  
With a silver crashing,  
A thin war of metal.

I have known the golden disc,  
I have seen it melting above me.  
I have known the stone-bright place,  
The hall of clear colours.

### III

O glass subtly evil, O confusion of colours !  
O light bound and bent in, O soul of the captive,  
Why am I warned ? Why am I sent away ?  
Why is your glitter full of curious mistrust ?  
O glass subtle and cunning, O powdery gold !  
O filaments of amber, two-faced iridescence !



## Ite

Go, my songs, seek your praise from the young  
and from the intolerant,  
Move among the lovers of perfection alone.  
Seek ever to stand in the hard Sophoclean light  
And take your wounds from it gladly.

## Dum Capitolium Scandet

How many will come after me  
singing as well as I sing, none better ;  
Telling the heart of their truth  
as I have taught them to tell it ;  
Fruit of my seed,  
O my unnameable children.

Know then that I loved you from afore-time,  
Clear speakers, naked in the sun, untrammelled.

## To Καλόν

EVEN in my dreams you have denied yourself to  
me  
And sent me only your handmaids.

## The Study in Aesthetics

THE very small children in patched clothing,  
Being smitten with an unusual wisdom,  
Stopped in their play as she passed them  
And cried up from their cobbles :

*Guarda ! Ahi, guarda ! ch' è be'a ! \**

But three years after this  
I heard the young Dante, whose last name I do  
not know—  
For there are, in Sirmione, twenty-eight young  
Dantes and thirty-four Catulli ;

And there had been a great catch of sardines,  
And his elders  
Were packing them in the great wooden boxes  
For the market in Brescia, and he  
Leapt about, snatching at the bright fish  
And getting in both of their ways ;  
And in vain they commanded him to *sta fermo !*  
And when they would not let him arrange  
The fish in the boxes  
He stroked those which were already arranged,  
Murmuring for his own satisfaction  
This identical phrase :

*Ch' è be'a.*

And at this I was mildly abashed.

\* *Bella.*

## The Bellaires

*Aus meinen grossen Schmerzen  
Mach' ich die kleinen Lieder.*

THE good Bellaires  
Do not understand the conduct of this world's  
affairs.

In fact they understood them so badly  
That they have had to cross the Channel.

Nine lawyers, four counsels, five judges and three  
proctors of the King,  
Together with the respective wives, husbands,  
sisters and heterogeneous connections of the  
good Bellaires,

Met to discuss their affairs ;  
But the good Bellaires have so little understood  
their affairs

That now there is no one at all  
Who can understand any affair of theirs. Yet  
Fourteen hunters still eat in the stables of  
The good Squire Bellaire ;  
But these may not suffer attainder,

## THE BELLAIRES

For they may not belong to the good Squire  
Bellaire

But to his wife.

On the contrary, if they do not belong to his  
wife,

He will plead

A "freedom from attainder"

For twelve horses and also for twelve boarhounds  
From Charles the Fourth ;

And a further freedom for the remainder  
Of horses, from Henry the Fourth.

But the judges,

Being free of mediæval scholarship,

Will pay no attention to this,

And there will be only the more confusion,  
Replevin, estoppel, espavin and what not.

Nine lawyers, four counsels, etc.,

Met to discuss their affairs,

But the sole result was bills

From lawyers to whom no one was indebted,

And even the lawyers

Were uncertain who was supposed to be indebted  
to them.

Wherefore the good Squire Bellaire

Resides now at Agde and Biaucaire.

To Carcassonne, Pui, and Alais

He fareth from day to day,

## THE BELLAIRES

Or takes the sea air  
Between Marseilles  
And Beziers.

And for all this I have considerable regret,  
For the good Bellaires  
Are very charming people.

## Salvationists

### I

COME, my songs, let us speak of perfection—  
We shall get ourselves rather disliked.

### II

Ah yes, my songs, let us resurrect  
The very excellent term *Rusticus*.  
Let us apply it in all its opprobrium  
To those to whom it applies.  
And you may decline to make them immortal.  
For we shall consider them and their state  
In delicate  
Opulent silence.

### III

Come, my songs,  
Let us take arms against this sea of stupidities—  
Beginning with Mumpodorus ;  
And against this sea of vulgarities—  
Beginning with Nimmim ;  
And against this sea of imbeciles—  
All the Bulmenian literati.

## Arides

THE bashful Arides  
Has married an ugly wife,  
He was bored with his manner of life,  
Indifferent and discouraged he thought he might  
as  
Well do this as anything else.

Saying within his heart, "I am no use to myself,  
"Let her, if she wants me, take me."  
He went to his doom.

## The Bath Tub

As a bathtub lined with white porcelain,  
When the hot water gives out or goes tepid,  
So is the slow cooling of our chivalrous passion,  
O my much praised but-not-altogether-satis-  
factory lady.

## Amitiés

*Old friends the most.*  
W. B. Y.

### I

*To one, on returning certain years after.*

You wore the same quite correct clothing,  
You took no pleasure at all in my triumphs,  
You had the same old air of condescension  
Mingled with a curious fear  
That I, myself, might have enjoyed them.

*Te voilà, mon Bourrienne, you also shall be  
immortal.*

### II

*To another.*

And we say good-bye to you also,  
For you seem never to have discovered  
That your relationship is wholly parasitic ;  
Yet to our feasts you bring neither  
Wit, nor good spirits, nor the pleasing attitudes  
Of discipleship.



## AMITIÉS

### III

But you, *bos amic*, we keep on,  
For to you we owe a real debt:  
In spite of your obvious flaws,  
You once discovered a moderate chop-house.

### IV

*Iste fuit vir incultus,  
Deo laus, quod est sepultus,  
Vermes habent eius vultum*

*A-a-a-a — A-men.*

*Ego autem jovialis  
Gaudero contubernalis  
Cum jocunda femina.*

## To Dives

WHO am I to condemn you, O Dives,  
I who am as much embittered  
With poverty  
As you are with useless riches ?

## Ladies

### *Agathas*

FOUR and forty lovers had Agathas in the old  
days,  
All of whom she refused ;  
And now she turns to me seeking love,  
And her hair also is turning.

### *Young Lady*

I have fed your lar with poppies,  
I have adored you for three full years ;  
And now you grumble because your dress does  
not fit  
And because I happen to say so.

### *Lesbia Illa*

Memnon, Memnon, that lady  
Who used to walk about amongst us  
With such gracious uncertainty,  
Is now wedded  
To a British householder.  
*Lugete, Veneres ! Lugete, Cupidinesque !*

## LADIES

### *Passing*

Flawless as Aphrodite,  
Thoroughly beautiful,  
Brainless,  
The faint odour of your patchouli,  
Faint, almost, as the lines of cruelty about your  
chin,  
Assails me, and concerns me almost as little.

## Coda

O MY songs,  
Why do you look so eagerly and so curiously into  
people's faces,  
Will you find your lost dead among them ?

## Ancora

GOOD GOD ! They say you are *risqué*,  
O canzonetti !  
We who went out into the four A.M. of the world  
Composing our albas,  
We who shook off our dew with the rabbits,  
We who have seen even Artemis a-binding her  
sandals,  
Have we ever heard the like ?  
O mountains of Hellas !!

Gather about me, O Muses !  
When we sat upon the granite brink in Helicon  
Clothed in the tattered sunlight,  
O Muses with delicate shins,  
O Muses with delectable knee-joints,  
When we splashed and were splashed with  
The lucid Castalian spray,  
Had we ever such an epithet cast upon us !!

## A TRANSLATION

FROM THE PROVENÇAL OF EN BERTRANS DE BORN.

### **“Dompna pois de me no'us cal”**

LADY, since you care nothing for me,  
And since you have shut me away from you  
Causelessly,  
I know not where to go seeking,  
For certainly  
I will never again gather  
Joy so rich, and if I find not ever  
A lady with look so speaking  
To my desire, worth yours whom I have lost,  
I'll have no other love at any cost.

And since I could not find a peer to you,  
Neither one so fair, nor of such heart,  
So eager and alert,  
Nor with such art  
In attire, nor so gay  
Nor with gift so bountiful and so true,

“DOMPNA POIS DE ME NO’US CAL”

I will go out a-searching,  
Culling from each a fair trait  
To make me a borrowed lady  
Till I again find you ready.

Bels Cembelins, I take of you your colour,  
For it’s your own, and your glance  
Where love is,  
A proud thing I do here,  
For, as to colour and eyes  
I shall have missed nothing at all,  
Having yours.  
I ask of Midons Aelis (of Montfort)  
Her straight speech free-running,  
That my phantom lack not in cunning.

At Chalais of the Viscountess, I would  
That she give me outright  
Her two hands and her throat,  
So take I my road  
To Rochechouart,  
Swift-foot to my Lady Anhes,  
Seeing that Tristan’s lady Iseutz had never  
Such grace of locks, I do ye to wit,  
Though she’d the far fame for it.

Of Audiart at Malemort,  
Though she with a full heart  
Wish me ill,  
I’d have her form that’s laced

“DOMPNA POIS DE ME NO'US CAL”

So cunningly,  
Without blemish, for her love  
Breaks not nor turns aside.  
I of Miels-de-ben demand  
Her straight fresh body,  
She is so supple and young,  
Her robes can but do her wrong.

Her white teeth, of the Lady Faidita  
I ask, and the fine courtesy  
She hath to welcome one,  
And such replies she lavishes  
Within her nest;  
Of Bels Mirals, the rest,  
Tall stature and gaiety,  
To make these avail  
She knoweth well, betide  
No change nor turning aside.

Ah, Bels Senher, Maent, at last  
I ask naught from you,  
Save that I have such hunger for  
This phantom  
As I've for you, such flame-lap,  
And yet I'd rather  
Ask of you than hold another,  
Mayhap, right close and kissed.  
Ah, lady, why have you cast  
Me out, knowing you hold me so fast !

## The Coming of War : Actaeon

AN image of Lethe,  
                    and the fields  
Full of faint light  
                    but golden,  
Gray cliffs,  
                    and beneath them  
A sea  
Harsher than granite,  
                    unstill, never ceasing ;  
High forms  
                    with the movement of gods,  
Perilous aspect ;  
                    And one said :  
“ This is Actaeon.”  
                    Actaeon of golden greaves !

Over fair meadows,  
Over the cool face of that field,  
Unstill, ever moving,  
Hosts of an ancient people,  
The silent cortège.



## After Ch'u Yuan

I WILL get me to the wood  
Where the gods walk garlanded in wistaria,  
By the silver blue flood  
    move others with ivory cars.  
There come forth many maidens  
    to gather grapes for the leopards, my friend,  
For there are leopards drawing the cars.

I will walk in the glade,  
I will come out of the new thicket  
    and accost the procession of maidens.

## Liu Ch'e

THE rustling of the silk is discontinued,  
Dust drifts over the court-yard,  
There is no sound of foot-fall, and the leaves  
Scurry into heaps and lie still,  
And she the rejoicer of the heart is beneath  
    them:

A wet leaf that clings to the threshold.

## Fan-piece, for her Imperial Lord

O FAN of white silk,  
clear as frost on the grass-blade,  
You also are laid aside.

## Ts'ai Chi'h

THE petals fall in the fountain,  
the orange-coloured rose-leaves,  
Their ochre clings to the stone.

## **In a Station of the Metro**

THE apparition of these faces in the crowd ;  
Petals on a wet, black bough.

## **Alba**

AS cool as the pale wet leaves  
  of lily-of-the-valley  
She lay beside me in the dawn.

## **Heather**

THE black panther treads at my side,  
And above my fingers  
There float the petal-like flames.

The milk-white girls  
Unbend from the holly-trees,  
And their snow-white leopard  
Watches to follow our trace.

## The Faun

HA ! sir, I have seen you sniffing and snoozling  
about

among my flowers.

And what, pray, do you know about horticulture,  
you capriped ?

“Come, Auster, come, Apeliota,  
And see the faun in our garden.  
But if you move or speak  
This thing will run at you  
And scare itself to spasms.”

## Pervigilium

THE gilded phaloi of the crocuses  
are thrusting at the spring air.  
Here is there naught of dead gods  
But a procession of festival,  
A procession, O Giulio Romano,  
Fit for your spirit to dwell in.  
Dione, your nights are upon us.

The dew is upon the leaf.  
The night about us is restless.

## The Encounter

ALL the while they were talking the new morality  
Her eyes explored me.  
And when I arose to go  
Her fingers were like the tissue  
Of a Japanese paper napkin.

## Tempora

Io! Io! Tamuz!  
The Dryad stands in my court-yard  
With plaintive, querulous crying.  
(Tamuz. Io! Tamuz!)  
Oh, no, she is not crying: "Tamuz."  
She says, "May my poems be printed this week?  
The god Pan is afraid to ask you,  
May my poems be printed this week?"

## Black Slippers : Bellotti

AT the table beyond us  
With her little suede slippers off,  
With her white-stockin'g'd feet  
Carefully kept from the floor by a napkin,  
She converses :

*Connaissez-vous, Ostende?*

The gurgling Italian lady on the other side of the  
restaurant

Replies with a certain hauteur,  
But I await with patience  
To see how Celestine will re-enter her slippers.  
She re-enters them with a groan.

## Society

THE family position was waning,  
And on this account the little Aurelia,  
Who had laughed on eighteen summers,  
Now bears the palsied contact of Phidippus.

## Image from D'Orleans

YOUNG men riding in the street  
In the bright new season  
Spur without reason,  
Causing their steeds to leap.

And at the pace they keep  
Their horses' armoured feet  
Strike sparks from the cobbled street  
In the bright new season.

## Papyrus

Spring. . .  
Too long. . .  
Gongula. . .

## “Ione, Dead the Long Year”

EMPTY are the ways,  
Empty are the ways of this land  
And the flowers  
                    Bend over with heavy heads.  
They bend in vain.  
Empty are the ways of this land  
                    Where Ione  
Walked once, and now does not walk  
But seems like a person just gone.

## Shop Girl

FOR a moment she rested against me  
Like a swallow half blown to the wall,  
And they talk of Swinburne's women,  
And the shepherdess meeting with Guido,  
And the harlots of Baudelaire.



## To Formianus' Young Lady Friend

AFTER VALERIUS CATULLUS

ALL Hail ! young lady with a nose  
by no means too small,  
With a foot unbeautiful,  
and with eyes that are not black,  
With fingers that are not long, and with a mouth  
undry,  
And with a tongue by no means too elegant,  
You are the friend of Formianus, the vendor of  
cosmetics,  
And they call you beautiful in the province,  
And you are even compared to Lesbia.  
  
O most unfortunate age !

## Tame Cat

“ It rests me to be among beautiful women.  
Why should one always lie about such matters ?

I repeat :

It rests me to converse with beautiful women  
Even though we talk nothing but nonsense,

The purring of the invisible antennæ  
Is both stimulating and delightful.”

## L'Art, 1910

GREEN arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth,  
Crushed strawberries! Come, let us feast our  
eyes.

## Simulacra

WHY does the horse-faced lady of just the un-  
mentionable age

Walk down Longacre reciting Swinburne to herself,  
inaudibly ?

Why does the small child in the soiled-white  
imitation fur coat

Crawl in the very black gutter beneath the grape  
stand ?

Why does the really handsome young woman  
approach me in Sackville Street

Undeterred by the manifest age of my trappings ?

## Women Before a Shop

THE gew-gaws of false amber and false turquoise  
attract them.

“ Like to like nature ” : these agglutinous  
yellows !

## Epilogue

O CHANSONS foregoing  
You were a seven days' wonder,  
When you came out in the magazines  
You created considerable stir in Chicago,

And now you are stale and worn out,  
You're a very depleted fashion,  
A hoop-skirt, a calash,  
An homely, transient antiquity.

Only emotion remains.

Your emotions ?

Are those of a maître-de-café.

# The Social Order

## I

THIS government official,  
Whose wife is several years his senior,  
Has such a caressing air  
When he shakes hands with young ladies.

## II

(Pompes Funèbres)

This old lady,  
Who was "so old that she was an atheist,"  
Is now surrounded  
By six candles and a crucifix,  
While the second wife of a nephew  
Makes hay with the things in her house.  
Her two cats  
Go before her into Avernus ;  
A sort of chloroformed suttee,  
And it is to be hoped that their spirits will walk  
With their tails up,  
And with a plaintive, gentle mewing,  
For it is certain that she has left on this earth  
No sound  
Save a squabble of female connections.

## The Tea Shop

THE girl in the tea shop  
  is not so beautiful as she was,  
The August has worn against her.  
She does not get up the stairs so eagerly,  
Yes, she also will turn middle-aged,  
And the glow of youth that she spread about us  
  as she brought us our muffins  
Will be spread about us no longer.  
  She also will turn middle-aged.

## Epitaphs

FU I

FU I loved the high cloud and the hill,  
Alas, he died of alcohol.

LI PO

And Li Po also died drunk.  
He tried to embrace a moon  
In the Yellow River.

## Our Contemporaries

WHEN the Tahitian princess  
Heard that he had decided,  
She rushed out into the sunlight and swarmed up  
a cocoanut palm tree,

But he returned to this island  
And wrote ninety Petrarchan sonnets.

NOTE.—Il s'agit d'un jeune poète qui a suivi le culte de Gauguin jusqu'à Tahiti même (et qui vit encore). Étant fort bel homme, quand la princesse bistre entendit qu'il voulait lui accorder ses faveurs elle montra son allegresse de la façon dont nous venons de parler. Malheureusement ses poèmes ne sont remplis que de ses propres subjectivités, style Victorien de la "Georgian Anthology."

## Ancient Wisdom, Rather Cosmic

So-SHU dreamed,  
And having dreamed that he was a bird, a bee,  
and a butterfly,  
He was uncertain why he should try to feel like  
anything else,

Hence his contentment.

## The Three Poets

CANDIDIA has taken a new lover  
And three poets are gone into mourning.  
The first has written a long elegy to "Chloris,"  
To "Chloris chaste and cold," his "only Chloris."  
The second has written a sonnet  
upon the mutability of woman,  
And the third writes an epigram to Candidia.



## The Gipsy

*“Est-ce que vous avez vu des autres—des camarades—avec des singes ou des ours ?”*

A Stray Gipsy—A.D. 1912.

THAT was the top of the walk, when he said :  
“Have you seen any others, any of our lot,  
“With apes or bears ?”

—A brown upstanding fellow  
Not like the half-castes,  
up on the wet road near Clermont.  
The wind came, and the rain,  
And mist clotted about the trees in the valley,  
And I'd the long ways behind me,  
gray Arles and Biaucaire,  
And he said, “Have you seen any of our lot ?”

I'd seen a lot of his lot . . .  
ever since Rhodéz,  
Coming down from the fair  
of St. John,  
With caravans, but never an ape or a bear.

## The Game of Chess

DOGOMATIC STATEMENT CONCERNING THE GAME OF CHESS :  
THEME FOR A SERIES OF PICTURES

RED knights, brown bishops, bright queens,  
Striking the board, falling in strong "L"s of  
colour,

Reaching and striking in angles,  
holding lines in one colour.

This board is alive with light ;  
these pieces are living in form,

Their moves break and reform the pattern :  
Luminous green from the rooks,

Clashing with "X"s of queens,  
looped with the knight-leaps.

"Y" pawns, cleaving, embanking !

Whirl! Centripetal! Mate! King down in the  
vortex,

Clash, leaping of bands, straight strips of hard  
colour,

Blocked lights working in. Escapes. Renewal of  
contest.

## Provincia Deserta

At Rochecoart,  
Where the hills part  
                  in three ways,  
And three valleys, full of winding roads,  
Fork out to south and north,  
There is a place of trees . . . gray with lichen.  
I have walked there  
                  thinking of old days.

At Chalais  
                  is a pleached arbour ;  
Old pensioners and old protected women  
Have the right there—  
                  it is charity.  
I have crept over old rafters,  
                  peering down  
Over the Dronne,  
                  over a stream full of lilies.  
Eastward the road lies,  
                  Aubeterre is eastward,  
With a garrulous old man at the inn.

## PROVINCIA DESERTA

I know the roads in that place :  
Mareuil to the north-east,  
                    La Tour,  
There are three keeps near Mareuil,  
And an old woman,  
                    glad to hear Arnaut,  
Glad to lend one dry clothing.

I have walked  
                    into Perigord,  
I have seen the torch-flames, high-leaping,  
Painting the front of that church,  
And, under the dark, whirling laughter.  
I have looked back over the stream  
                    and seen the high building,  
Seen the long minarets, the white shafts.  
I have gone in Ribeyrac  
                    and in Sarlat,  
I have climbed rickety stairs, heard talk of Croy,  
Walked over En Bertran's old layout,  
Have seen Narbonne, and Cahors and Chalus,  
Have seen Excideuil, carefully fashioned.

I have said :

- “ Here such a one walked.  
“ Here Cœur-de-Lion was slain.  
                    “ Here was good singing.  
“ Here one man hastened his step.  
                    “ Here one lay panting.”

## PROVINCIA DESERTA

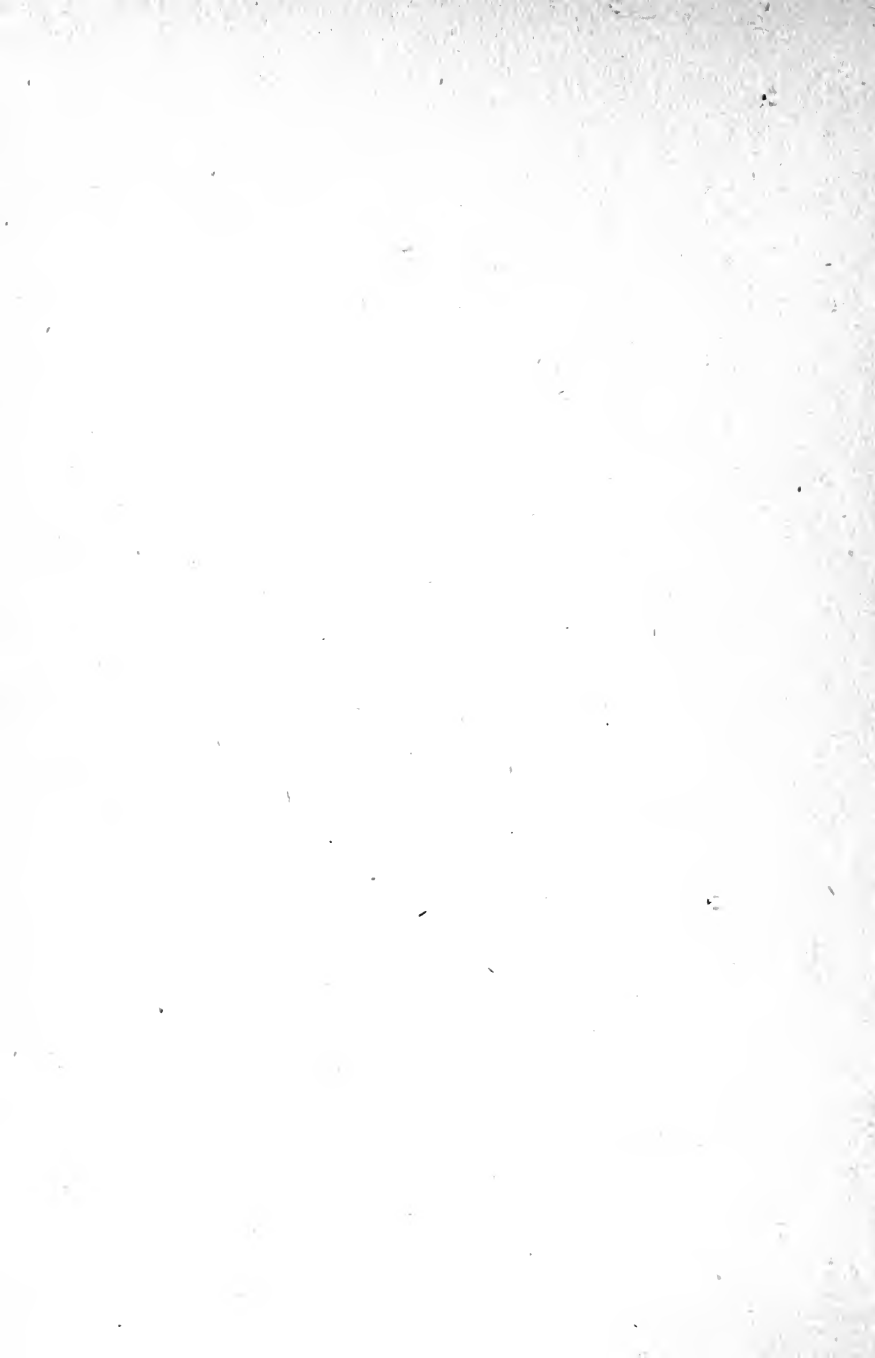
I have looked south from Hautefort,  
    thinking of Montaignac, southward.  
I have lain in Rocafixada,  
    level with sunset,  
Have seen the copper come down  
    tinging the mountains,  
I have seen the fields, pale, clear as an emerald,  
Sharp peaks, high spurs, distant castles.  
I have said: "The old roads have lain here.  
"Men have gone by such and such valleys  
"Where the great halls are closer together."  
I have seen Foix on its rock, seen Toulouse, and  
    Arles greatly altered,  
I have seen the ruined "Dorata."  
    I have said:  
"Riquier! Guido."  
    I have thought of the second Troy,  
Some little prized place in Auvergnat:  
Two men tossing a coin, one keeping a castle,  
One set on the highway to sing.  
    He sang a woman.  
Auvergne rose to the song;  
    The Dauphin backed him.  
"The castle to Austors!"  
    "Pieire kept the singing—  
"A fair man and a pleasant."  
    He won the lady,  
Stole her away for himself, kept her against  
    armed force:

## PROVINCIA DESERTA

So ends that story.  
That age is gone ;  
Pieire de Maensac is gone.  
I have walked over these roads ;  
I have thought of them living.

# CATHAY

FOR THE MOST PART FROM THE CHINESE OF RIHAKU,  
FROM THE NOTES OF THE LATE ERNEST  
FENOLLOSA, AND THE DECIPHERINGS  
OF THE PROFESSORS MORI  
AND ARIGA





## Song of the Bowmen of Shu

HERE we are, picking the first fern-shoots  
And saying: When shall we get back to our  
country?

Here we are because we have the Ken-nin for our  
foemen,

We have no comfort because of these Mongols.

We grub the soft fern-shoots,

When anyone says "Return," the others are full  
of sorrow.

Sorrowful minds, sorrow is strong, we are hungry  
and thirsty.

Our defence is not yet made sure, no one can let  
his friend return.

We grub the old fern-stalks.

We say: Will we be let to go back in October?

There is no ease in royal affairs, we have no  
comfort.

Our sorrow is bitter, but we would not return to  
our country.

What flower has come into blossom?

Whose chariot? The General's.

## SONG OF THE BOWMEN OF SHU

Horses, his horses even, are tired. They were strong.

We have no rest, three battles a month.

By heaven, his horses are tired.

The generals are on them, the soldiers are by them

The horses are well trained, the generals have ivory arrows and quivers ornamented with fish-skin.

The enemy is swift, we must be careful.

When we set out, the willows were drooping with spring,

We come back in the snow,

We go slowly, we are hungry and thirsty,

Our mind is full of sorrow, who will know of our grief ?

*By Bunno.  
Very early.*

## The Beautiful Toilet

BLUE, blue is the grass about the river  
And the willows have overfilled the close garden.  
And within, the mistress, in the midmost of her  
youth,  
White, white of face, hesitates, passing the door.  
Slender, she puts forth a slender hand,

And she was a courtesan in the old days,  
And she has married a sot,  
Who now goes drunkenly out  
And leaves her too much alone.

*By Mei Sheng.*

*B.C. 140.*

## The River Song

THIS boat is of shato-wood, and its gunwales are  
cut magnolia,  
Musicians with jewelled flutes and with pipes of  
gold  
Fill full the sides in rows, and our wine  
Is rich for a thousand cups.  
We carry singing girls, drift with the drifting  
water,  
Yet Sennin needs  
A yellow stork for a charger, and all our seamen  
Would follow the white gulls or ride them.  
Kutsu's prose song  
Hangs with the sun and moon.

King So's terraced palace  
is now but a barren hill,  
But I draw pen on this barge  
Causing the five peaks to tremble,  
And I have joy in these words  
like the joy of blue islands.  
(If glory could last forever

## THE RIVER SONG

Then the waters of Han would flow northward.)  
And I have moped in the Emperor's garden,  
    awaiting an order-to-write!  
I looked at the dragon-pond, with its willow-  
    coloured water  
Just reflecting the sky's tinge,  
And heard the five-score nightingales aimlessly  
    singing.

The eastern wind brings the green colour into the  
    island grasses at Yei-shu,  
The purple house and the crimson are full of  
    Spring softness.  
South of the pond the willow-tips are half-blue  
    and bluer,  
Their cords tangle in mist, against the brocade-  
    like palace.  
Vine-strings a hundred feet long hang down from  
    carved railings,  
And high over the willows, the fine birds sing to  
    each other, and listen,  
Crying—"Kwan, Kuan," for the early wind, and  
    the feel of it.  
The wind bundles itself into a bluish cloud and  
    wanders off.  
Over a thousand gates, over a thousand doors are  
    the sounds of spring singing,  
And the Emperor is at Ko.  
Five clouds hang aloft, bright on the purple sky,

## THE RIVER SONG

The imperial guards come forth from the golden  
house with their armour a-gleaming.

The Emperor in his jewelled car goes out to  
inspect his flowers,

He goes out to Hori, to look at the wing-flapping  
storks,

He returns by way of Sei rock, to hear the new  
nightingales,

For the gardens at Jo-run are full of new nightin-  
gales,

Their sound is mixed in this flute,

Their voice is in the twelve pipes here.

*By Rihaku.*

*8th century A.D.*

## The River-Merchant's Wife: a Letter

WHILE my hair was still cut straight across my  
forehead

I played about the front gate, pulling flowers  
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,  
You walked about my seat, playing with blue  
plums.

And we went on living in the village of Chokan:  
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.  
I never laughed, being bashful.  
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.  
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,  
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours  
Forever and forever, and forever.  
Why should I climb the look out ?

At sixteen you departed,  
You went into far Ku-to-Yen, by the river of  
swirling eddies,

## THE RIVER MERCHANT'S WIFE

And you have been gone five months.  
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.  
You dragged your feet when you went out.  
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different  
    mosses,  
Too deep to clear them away!  
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.  
The paired butterflies are already yellow with  
    August  
Over the grass in the West garden,  
They hurt me.  
I grow older,  
If you are coming down through the narrows of  
    the river Kiang,  
Please let me know beforehand,  
And I will come out to meet you,  
    As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

*By Rihaku.*



## The Jewel Stairs' Grievance

THE jewelled steps are already quite white with  
dew,  
It is so late that the dew soaks my gauze  
stockings,  
And I let down the crystal curtain  
And watch the moon through the clear autumn.

*By Rihaku.*

NOTE.—Jewel stairs, therefore a palace. Grievance, therefore there is something to complain of. Gauze stockings, therefore a court lady, not a servant who complains. Clear autumn, therefore he has no excuse on account of weather. Also she has come early, for the dew has not merely whitened the stairs, but has soaked her stockings. The poem is especially prized because she utters no direct reproach.

## Poem by the Bridge at Ten-Shin

MARCH has come to the bridge head,  
Peach boughs and apricot boughs hang over a  
thousand gates,  
At morning there are flowers to cut the heart,  
And evening drives them on the eastward-flowing  
waters.  
Petals are on the gone waters and on the going,  
And on the back-swirling eddies,  
But to-day's men are not the men of the old days,  
Though they hang in the same way over the  
bridge-rail.

The sea's colour moves at the dawn  
And the princes still stand in rows, about the  
throne,  
And the moon falls over the portals of Sei-go-yo,  
And clings to the walls and the gate-top.  
With head gear glittering against the cloud and  
sun,  
The lords go forth from the court, and into far  
borders.

## POEM BY THE BRIDGE AT TEN-SHIN

They ride upon dragon-like horses,  
Upon horses with head-trappings of yellow metal,  
And the streets make way for their passage.

Haughty their passing,

Haughty their steps as they go into great  
banquets,

To high halls and curious food,

To the perfumed air and girls dancing,

To clear flutes and clear singing ;

To the dance of the seventy couples ;

To the mad chase through the gardens.

Night and day are given over to pleasure

And they think it will last a thousand autumns,

Unwearying autumns.

For them the yellow dogs howl portents in vain,

And what are they compared to the lady

Riokushu,

That was cause of hate !

Who among them is a man like Han-rei

Who departed alone with his mistress,

With her hair unbound, and he his own skiffs-  
man !

*By Rihaku.*

## Lament of the Frontier Guard

By the North Gate, the wind blows full of sand,  
Lonely from the beginning of time until now !  
Trees fall, the grass goes yellow with autumn.  
I climb the towers and towers

to watch out the barbarous land :

Desolate castle, the sky, the wide desert.

There is no wall left to this village.

Bones white with a thousand frosts,

High heaps, covered with trees and grass ;

Who brought this to pass ?

Who has brought the flaming imperial anger ?

Who has brought the army with drums and with  
kettle-drums ?

Barbarous kings.

A gracious spring, turned to blood-ravenous  
autumn,

A turmoil of wars-men, spread over the middle  
kingdom,

Three hundred and sixty thousand,

And sorrow, sorrow like rain.

Sorrow to go, and sorrow, sorrow returning,

## LAMENT OF THE FRONTIER GUARD

Desolate, desolate fields,  
And no children of warfare upon them,  
    No longer the men for offence and defence.  
Ah, how shall you know the dreary sorrow at the  
    North Gate,  
With Rihoku's name forgotten,  
And we guardsmen fed to the tigers.

*By Rihaku.*

## Exile's Letter

To So-Kin of Rakuyo, ancient friend, Chancellor  
of Gen.

Now I remember that you built me a special tavern  
By the south side of the bridge at Ten-Shin.

With yellow gold and white jewels, we paid for  
songs and laughter

And we were drunk for month on month, forgetting  
the kings and princes.

Intelligent men came drifting in from the sea and  
from the west border,

And with them, and with you especially

There was nothing at cross purpose,

And they made nothing of sea-crossing or of  
mountain crossing,

If only they could be of that fellowship,

And we all spoke out our hearts and minds, and  
without regret.

And then I was sent off to South Wei,  
smothered in laurel groves,

And you to the north of Raku-hoku,

Till we had nothing but thoughts and memories  
in common.

## EXILE'S LETTER

And then, when separation had come to its  
worst,  
We met, and travelled into Sen-Go,  
Through all the thirty-six folds of the turning  
and twisting waters,  
Into a valley of the thousand bright flowers,  
That was the first valley ;  
And into ten thousand valleys full of voices and  
pine-winds.  
And with silver harness and reins of gold,  
Out come the East of Kan foreman and his  
company.  
And there came also the " True man " of Shi-yo  
to meet me,  
Playing on a jewelled mouth-organ.  
In the storied houses of San-Ko they gave us  
more Sennin music,  
Many instruments, like the sound of young  
phoenix broods.  
The foreman of Kan Chu, drunk, danced  
because his long sleeves wouldn't  
keep still  
With that music playing.  
And I, wrapped in brocade, went to sleep with  
my head on his lap,  
And my spirit so high it was all over the  
heavens,  
And before the end of the day we were scattered  
like stars, or rain.

## EXILE'S LETTER

I had to be off to So, far away over the waters,  
You back to your river-bridge.

And your father, who was brave as a leopard,  
Was governor in Hei Shu, and put down the  
barbarian rabble.

And one May he had you send for me,  
despite the long distance.

And what with broken wheels and so on, I won't  
say it wasn't hard going,

Over roads twisted like sheep's guts.

And I was still going, late in the year,  
in the cutting wind from the North,

And thinking how little you cared for the  
cost,

and you caring enough to pay it.

And what a reception :

Red jade cups, food well set on a blue jewelled  
table,

And I was drunk, and had no thought of  
returning.

And you would walk out with me to the western  
corner of the castle,

To the dynastic temple, with water about it clear  
as blue jade,

With boats floating, and the sound of mouth-  
organs and drums,

With ripples like dragon-scales, going grass green  
on the water,



## EXILE'S LETTER

Pleasure lasting, with courtezans, going and coming without hindrance,

With the willow flakes falling like snow,

And the vermilioned girls getting drunk about sunset,

And the water a hundred feet deep reflecting green eyebrows

—Eyebrows painted green are a fine sight in young moonlight,

Gracefully painted—

And the girls singing back at each other,

Dancing in transparent brocade,

And the wind lifting the song, and interrupting it,

Tossing it up under the clouds.

And all this comes to an end.

And is not again to be met with.

I went up to the court for examination,

Tried Layu's luck, offered the Choyo song,

And got no promotion,

and went back to the East Mountains  
white-headed.

And once again, later, we met at the South bridge-head.

And then the crowd broke up, you went north to San palace,

And if you ask how I regret that parting :

It is like the flowers falling at Spring's end  
Confused, whirled in a tangle.

## EXILE'S LETTER

What is the use of talking, and there is no end of  
talking,  
There is no end of things in the heart.  
I call in the boy,  
Have him sit on his knees here  
    To seal this,  
And send it a thousand miles, thinking.

*By Rihaku.*

*From Rihaku*

## FOUR POEMS OF DEPARTURE

*Light rain is on the light dust  
The willows of the inn-yard  
Will be going greener and greener,  
But you, Sir, had better take wine ere your departure,  
For you will have no friends about you  
When you come to the gates of Go.*

### **Separation on the River Kiang**

KO-JIN goes west from Ko-kaku-ro,  
The smoke-flowers are blurred over the river.  
His lone sail blots the far sky.  
And now I see only the river,  
The long Kiang, reaching heaven.

### **Taking Leave of a Friend**

BLUE mountains to the north of the walls,  
White river winding about them ;  
Here we must make separation ;

## FOUR POEMS OF DEPARTURE

And go out through a thousand miles of dead  
grass.

Mind like a floating wide cloud.

Sunset like the parting of old acquaintances

Who bow over their clasped hands at a distance.

Our horses neigh to each other

as we are departing.

### Leave-taking near Shoku

*“Sanso, King of Shoku, built roads.”*

THEY say the roads of Sanso are steep,

Sheer as the mountains.

The walls rise in a man's face,

Clouds grow out of the hill

at his horse's bridle.

Sweet trees are on the paved way of the Shin,

Their trunks burst through the paving,

And freshets are bursting their ice

in the midst of Shoku, a proud city.

Men's fates are already set,

There is no need of asking diviners.

## FOUR POEMS OF DEPARTURE

### The City of Choan

THE phoenix are at play on their terrace.  
The phoenix are gone, the river flows on alone.  
Flowers and grass  
Cover over the dark path  
          where lay the dynastic house of the Go.  
The bright cloths and bright caps of Shin  
Are now the base of old hills.

The Three Mountains fall through the far heaven,  
The isle of White Heron  
          splits the two streams apart.  
Now the high clouds cover the sun  
And I can not see Choan afar  
And I am sad.

## South-Folk in Cold Country

THE Dai horse neighs against the bleak wind of  
Etsu,  
The birds of Etsu have no love for En, in the  
north,  
Emotion is born out of habit.  
Yesterday we went out of the Wild-Goose gate,  
To-day from the Dragon-Pen.\*  
Surprised. Desert turmoil. Sea sun.  
Flying snow bewilders the barbarian heaven.  
Lice swarm like ants over our accoutrements.  
Mind and spirit drive on the feathery banners.  
Hard fight gets no reward.  
Loyalty is hard to explain.  
Who will be sorry for General Rishogu,  
the swift moving,  
Whose white head is lost for this province ?

\* *I.e.*, we have been warring from one end of the empire to the other, now east, now west, on each border.

## Sennin Poem by Kakuhaku

THE red and green kingfishers  
flash between the orchids and clover,  
One bird casts its gleam on another.

Green vines hang through the high forest,  
They weave a whole roof to the mountain,  
The lone man sits with shut speech,  
He purrs and pats the clear strings.

He throws his heart up through the sky,  
He bites through the flower pistil  
and brings up a fine fountain.

The red-pine-tree god looks on him and wonders.  
He rides through the purple smoke to visit the  
sennin,

He takes "Floating Hill" \* by the sleeve,  
He claps his hand on the back of the great water  
sennin.

But you, you dam'd crowd of gnats,  
Can you even tell the age of a turtle ?

\* Name of a sennin.

## A Ballad of the Mulberry Road

(*Fenollosa MSS., very early.*)

THE sun rises in south east corner of things  
To look on the tall house of the Shin  
For they have a daughter named Rafu,  
    (pretty girl)  
She made the name for herself: "Gauze Veil,"  
For she feeds mulberries to silkworms,  
    She gets them by the south wall of the  
    town.

With green strings she makes the warp of her  
    basket,  
She makes the shoulder-straps of her basket  
    from the boughs of Katsura,  
And she piles her hair up on the left side of her  
    head-piece.

Her earrings are made of pearl,  
Her underskirt is of green pattern-silk,  
Her overskirt is the same silk dyed in purple,  
And when men going by look on Rafu  
    They set down their burdens,  
They stand and twirl their moustaches.



## Old Idea of Choan by Rosoriu

### I.

THE narrow streets cut into the wide highway at  
Choan,

Dark oxen, white horses,

drag on the seven coaches with outriders.

The coaches are perfumed wood,

The jewelled chair is held up at the crossway,

Before the royal lodge

a glitter of golden saddles, awaiting the  
princess,

They eddy before the gate of the barons.

The canopy embroidered with dragons

drinks in and casts back the sun.

Evening comes.

The trappings are bordered with mist.

The hundred cords of mist are spread through

and double the trees,

Night birds, and night women,

spread out their sounds through the  
gardens.

# OLD IDEA OF CHOAN BY ROSORIU

## II.

Birds with flowery wing, hovering butterflies  
    crowd over the thousand gates,  
Trees that glitter like jade,  
    terraces tinged with silver,  
The seed of a myriad hues,  
A net-work of arbours and passages and covered  
    ways,  
Double towers, winged roofs,  
    border the net-work of ways :  
A place of felicitous meeting.  
Riu's house stands out on the sky,  
    with glitter of colour  
As Butei of Kan had made the high golden lotus  
    to gather his dews,  
Before it another house which I do not know :  
How shall we know all the friends  
    whom we meet on strange roadways ?

## To-Em-Mei's "The Unmoving Cloud"

"Wet springtime," says To-em-mei,  
"Wet spring in the garden."

### I.

THE clouds have gathered, and gathered,  
and the rain falls and falls,  
The eight ply of the heavens  
are all folded into one darkness,  
And the wide, flat road stretches out.  
I stop in my room toward the East, quiet, quiet,  
I pat my new cask of wine.  
My friends are estranged, or far distant,  
I bow my head and stand still.

### II

Rain, rain, and the clouds have gathered,  
The eight ply of the heavens are darkness,  
The flat land is turned into river.  
"Wine, wine, here is wine!"  
I drink by my eastern window.  
I think of talking and man,  
And no boat, no carriage, approaches.

TO-EM-MEI'S "THE UNMOVING CLOUD"

III

The trees in my east-looking garden  
are bursting out with new twigs,  
They try to stir new affection,

And men say the sun and moon keep on moving  
because they can't find a soft seat.

The birds flutter to rest in my tree,  
and I think I have heard them saying,  
"It is not that there are no other men  
But we like this fellow the best,  
But however we long to speak  
He can not know of our sorrow."

*T'ao Yuan Ming.*  
A.D. 365-427.

END OF CATHAY

## Near Perigord

*A Perigord, pres del muralh  
Tan que i puosch 'om gitar ab malh.*

YOU'D have men's hearts up from the dust  
And tell their secrets, Messire Cino,  
Right enough? Then read between the lines  
of Ue St. Cire,  
Solve me the riddle, for you know the tale.

Bertrans, En Bertrans, left a fine canzone:  
"Maent, I love you, you have turned me out.  
The voice at Montfort, Lady Agnes' hair,  
Bel Miral's stature, the vicountess' throat,  
Set all together, are not worthy of you. . ."  
And all the while you sing out that canzone,  
Think you that Maent lived at Montaignac,  
One at Chalais, another at Malemort  
Hard over Brive—for every lady a castle,  
Each place strong.

Oh, is it easy enough?  
Tairiran held hall in Montaignac,

## NEAR PERIGORD

His brother-in-law was all there was of power  
In Perigord, and this good union  
Gobbled all the land, and held it later  
for some hundreds years.

And our En Bertrams was in Altafort,  
Hub of the wheel, the stirrer-up of strife,  
As caught by Dante in the last wallow of hell—  
The headless trunk “that made its head a lamp.”  
For separation wrought out separation,  
And he who set the strife between brother and  
brother  
And had his way with the old English king,  
Viced in such torture for the “counterpass.”

How would you live, with neighbours set about  
you—

Poitiers and Brive, untaken Rochechouart,  
Spread like the finger-tips of one frail hand ;  
And you on that great mountain of a palm—  
Not a neat ledge, not Foix between its streams,  
But one huge back half-covered up with pine,  
Worked for and snatched from the string-purse of  
Born—

The four round towers, four brothers—mostly  
fools :

What could he do but play the desperate chess,  
And stir old grudges ?

“ Pawn your castles, lords !  
Let the Jews pay.”

## NEAR PERIGORD

And the great scene—  
(That, maybe, never happened !)

Beaten at last,  
Before the hard old king :

“ Your son, ah, since he died  
My wit and worth are cobwebs brushed aside  
In the full flare of grief. Do what you will.”

Take the whole man, and ravel out the story.  
He loved this lady in castle Montaignac ?  
The castle flanked him—he had need of it.  
You read to-day, how long the overlords of  
Perigord,  
The Talleyrands, have held the place, it was no  
transient fiction.  
And Maent failed him ? Or saw through the  
scheme ?

And all his net-like thought of new alliance ?  
Chalais is high, a-level with the poplars.  
Its lowest stones just meet the valley tips  
Where the low Dronne is filled with water-lilies.  
And Rochecouart can match it, stronger yet,  
The very spur's end, built on sheerest cliff,  
And Malemort keeps its close hold on Brive,  
While Born his own close purse, his rabbit warren,  
His subterranean chamber with a dozen doors,  
A-bristle with antennae to feel roads,  
To sniff the traffic into Perigord.

## NEAR PERIGORD

And that hard phalanx, that unbroken line,  
The ten good miles from thence to Maent's castle,  
All of his flank—how could he do without her ?  
And all the road to Cahors, to Toulouse ?  
What would he do without her ?

“ Papiol,  
Go forthright singing—Anhes, Cembelins.  
There is a throat ; ah, there are two white hands ;  
There is a trellis full of early roses,  
And all my heart is bound about with love.  
Where am I come with compound flatteries—  
What doors are open to fine compliment ? ”  
And every one half jealous of Maent ?  
He wrote the catch to pit their jealousies  
Against her, give her pride in them ?

Take his own speech, make what you will of it—  
And still the knot, the first knot, of Maent ?

Is it a love poem ? Did he sing of war ?  
Is it an intrigue to run subtly out,  
Born of a jongleur's tongue, freely to pass  
Up and about and in and out the land,  
Mark him a craftsman and a strategist ?  
(St. Leider had done as much at Polhonac,  
Singing a different stave, as closely hidden.)  
Oh, there is precedent, legal tradition,  
To sing one thing when your song means another,



## NEAR PERIGORD

“*Et albirar ab lor bordon—*”

Foix' count knew that. What is Sir Bertrans'  
singing?

Maent, Maent, and yet again Maent,  
Or war and broken heaumes and politics?

### II

End fact. Try fiction, Let us say we see  
En Bertrans, a tower-room at Hautefort,  
Sunset, the ribbon-like road lies, in red cross-light,  
South toward Montaignac, and he bends at a  
table

Scribbling, swearing between his teeth, by his left  
hand

Lie little strips of parchment covered over,  
Scratched and erased with *al* and *ochaisos*.

Testing his list of rhymes, a lean man? Bilious?  
With a red stragglng beard?

And the green cat's-eye lifts toward Montaignac.

Or take his “magnet” singer setting out,  
Dodging his way past Aubeterre, singing at  
Chalais

In the vaulted hall,  
Or, by a lichened tree at Rochecouart  
Aimlessly watching a hawk above the valleys,  
Waiting his turn in the mid-summer evening,

## NEAR PERIGORD

Thinking of Aelis, whom he loved heart and soul . . .

To find her half alone, Montfort away,  
And a brown, placid, hated woman visiting her,  
Spoiling his visit, with a year before the next one.  
Little enough ?

Or carry him forward. "Go through all the courts,  
My Magnet," Bertrand had said.

We came to Ventadour  
In the mid love court, he sings out the canzon,  
No one hears save Arrimon Luc D'Esparo—  
No one hears aught save the gracious sound of compliments.

Sir Arrimon counts on his fingers, Montfort,  
Rochecouart, Chalais, the rest, the tactic,  
Malemort, guesses beneath, sends word to Cœur de Lion :

The compact, de Born smoked out, trees felled  
About his castle, cattle driven out !  
Or no one sees it, and En Bertrands prospered ?

And ten years after, or twenty, as you will,  
Arnaut and Richard lodge beneath Chalus :  
The dull round towers encroaching on the field,  
The tents tight drawn, horses at tether  
Further and out of reach, the purple night,

## NEAR PERIGORD

The crackling of small fires, the bannerets,  
The lazy leopards on the largest banner,  
Stray gleams on hanging mail, an armourer's torch-  
flare  
Melting on steel.

And in the quietest space  
They probe old scandals, say de Born is dead ;  
And we've the gossip (skipped six hundred years).  
Richard shall die to-morrow—leave him there  
Talking of *trobair clus* with Daniel.  
And the "best craftsman" sings out his friend's  
song,  
Envies its vigour . . . and deplores the technique,  
Dispraises his own skill?—That's as you will.  
And they discuss the dead man,  
Plantagenet puts the riddle: "Did he love her?"  
And Arnaut parries: "Did he love your sister?"  
True, he has praised her, but in some opinion  
He wrote that praise only to show he had  
The favour of your party, had been well received."

"You knew the man."

"You knew the man."

"I am an artist, you have tried both métiers."

"You were born near him."

"Do we know our friends?"

"Say that he saw the castles, say that he loved  
Maent!"

## NEAR PERIGORD

“ Say that he loved her, does it solve the riddle ? ”

End the discussion, Richard goes out next day  
And gets a quarrel-bolt shot through his vizard,  
Pardons the bowman, dies,

Ends our discussion. Arnaut ends  
“ In sacred odour ” — (that’s apocryphal !)  
And we can leave the talk till Dante writes :  
*Surely I saw, and still before my eyes  
Goes on that headless trunk, that bears for light  
Its own head swinging, gripped by the dead hair,  
And like a swinging lamp that says, “ Ah me !  
I severed men, my head and heart  
Ye see here severed, my life’s counterpart.”*

Or take En Bertrans ?

### III

*Ed eran due in uno, ed uno in due.*  
Inferno, XXVIII, 125.

“ Bewildering spring, and by the Auvezere  
Poppies and day’s-eyes in the green émail  
Rose over us ; and we knew all that stream,  
And our two horses had traced out the valleys ;  
Knew the low flooded lands squared out with  
poplars,  
In the young days when the deep sky befriended.

## NEAR PERIGORD

And great wings beat above us in the twilight,  
And the great wheels in heaven  
Bore us together . . . surging . . . and apart . . .  
Believing we should meet with lips and hands.

High, high and sure . . . and then the counter-  
thrust :

‘Why do you love me? Will you always love  
me?’

But I am like the grass, I can not love you.’

Or, ‘Love, and I love and love you,

And hate your mind, not *you*, your soul, your  
hands.’

So to this last estrangement, Tairiran!

There shut up in his castle, Tairiran’s,  
She who had nor ears nor tongue save in her  
hands,

Gone—ah, gone—untouched, unreachable!

She who could never live save through one person,

She who could never speak save to one person,

And all the rest of her a shifting change,

A broken bundle of mirrors . . . !”

## Villanelle: the Psychological Hour

I HAD over-prepared the event,  
that much was ominous.  
With middle-ageing care  
I had laid out just the right books.  
I had almost turned down the pages.

*Beauty is so rare a thing.  
So few drink of my fountain.*

So much barren regret,  
So many hours wasted !  
And now I watch, from the window,  
the rain, the wandering busses.

“ Their little cosmos is shaken ”—  
the air is alive with that fact.  
In their parts of the city  
they are played on by diverse forces.  
How do I know ?  
Oh, I know well enough.  
For them there is something afoot.

## VILLANELLE

As for me :  
I had over-prepared the event—

*Beauty is so rare a thing.  
So few drink of my fountain.*

Two friends: a breath of the forest . . .  
Friends? Are people less friends  
because one has just, at least, found  
them?

Twice they promised to come.  
“*Between the night and morning?*”

*Beauty would drink of my mind.*  
Youth would awhile forget  
my youth is gone from me.

## II

(“Speak up! You have danced so stiffly?  
Someone admired your works,  
And said so frankly.

“Did you talk like a fool,  
The first night?  
The second evening?”

“*But they promised again:  
'To-morrow at tea-time.'*”)

## VILLANELLE

### III

Now the third day is here—  
no word from either ;  
No word from her nor him,  
Only another man's note :  
“ Dear Pound, I am leaving England.”



## Dans un Omnibus de Londres

LES yeux d'une morte aimée  
M'ont salué,  
Enchassés dans un visage stupide  
Dont tous les autres traits étaient banals,  
Ils m'ont salué

Et alors je vis bien des choses  
Au dedans de ma mémoire  
Remuer,  
S'éveiller.

Je vis des canards sur le bord d'un lac minuscule,  
Auprès d'un petit enfant gai, bossu.

Je vis les colonnes anciennes en "toc"  
Du Parc Monceau,  
Et deux petites filles graciles,  
Des patriciennes,  
                                  aux toisons couleur de lin,  
Et des pigeonnes  
Grasses  
                                  comme des poulardes.

## DANS UN OMNIBUS DE LONDRES

Je vis le parc,  
Et tous les gazons divers  
Où nous avons loué des chaises  
Pour quatre sous.

Je vis les cygnes noirs,  
Japonais,  
Leurs ailes  
Teintées de couleur sang-de-dragon,

Et toutes les fleurs  
D'Armenonville.

Les yeux d'une morte  
M'ont salué.

## To a Friend Writing on Cabaret Dancers

*"Breathe not the word to-morrow in her ears."*

Vir Quidem, on Dancers.

GOOD "Hedgethorn," for we'll anglicize your  
name

Until the last slut's hanged and the last pig  
disemboweled,

Seeing your wife is charming and your child  
Sings in the open meadow—at least the kodak  
says so—

My good fellow, you, on a cabaret silence  
And the dancers, you write a sonnet,  
Say "Forget To-morrow," being of all men  
The most prudent, orderly, and decorous!

"Pepita" has no to-morrow, so you write.

Pepita has such to-morrows: with the hands  
puffed out,

The pug-dog's features encrusted with tallow  
Sunk in a frowsy collar—an unbrushed black.  
She will not bathe too often, but her jewels

## CABARET DANCERS

Will be a stuffy, opulent sort of fungus  
Spread on both hands and on the up-pushed  
bosom—

It juts like a shelf between the jowl and corset.

Have you, or I seen most of cabarets, good  
Hedgethorn ?

Here's Pepita, tall and slim as an Egyptian  
mummy,

Marsh-cranberries, the ribbed and angular pods

Flare up with scarlet orange on stiff stalks

And so Pepita

flares on the crowded stage before our  
tables

Or slithers about between the dishonest waiters—

“ Carmen est maigre, un trait de bistre  
Cerne son ceil de gitana ”

And “ rend la flamme ”

you know the deathless verses.

I search the features, the avaricious features

Pulled by the kohl and rouge out of resemblance—

Six pence the object for a change of passion.

“ Write me a poem.”

Come now, my dear Pepita,

“-ita, bonita, chiquita,”

that's what you mean you advertising  
spade,

## CABARET DANCERS

Or take the intaglio, my fat great-uncle's heirloom :

Cupid, astride a phallus with two wings,  
Swinging a cat-o'-nine-tails.

No. Pepita,  
I have seen through the crust.

I don't know what you look like  
But your smile pulls one way  
and your painted grin another,  
While that cropped fool,  
that tom-boy who can't earn her living.

Come, come to-morrow,  
To-morrow in ten years at the latest,  
She will be drunk in the ditch, but you, Pepita,  
Will be quite rich, quite plump, with pug-bitch  
features,

With a black tint staining your cuticle,  
Prudent and svelte Pepita.

“Poète, writ me a poème!”  
Spanish and Paris, love of the arts part of your  
geisha-culture!

Euhenia, in short skirts, slaps her wide stomach,  
Pulls up a roll of fat for the pianist,  
“Pauvre femme maigre!” she says.

He sucks his chop bone,  
That some one else has paid for,  
grins up an amiable grin,  
Explains the decorations.

## CABARET DANCERS

Good Hedgethorn, they all have futures,  
All these people.

Old Popkoff

Will dine next week with Mrs. Basil,  
Will meet a duchess and an ex-diplomat's widow  
From Weehawken—who has never known  
Any but "Majesties" and Italian nobles.

Euhenia will have a *fonda* in Orbajosa.

The amorous nerves will give way to digestive ;  
"Delight thy soul in fatness," saith the preacher.  
We can't preserve the elusive "*mica salis*,"  
It may last well in these dark northern climates,  
Nell Gwynn's still here, despite the reformation,  
And Edward's mistresses still light the stage,  
A glamour of classic youth in their deportment.  
The prudent whore is not without her future,  
Her bourgeois dulness is deferred.

Her present dulness . . .

Oh well, her present dulness . . .

Now in Venice, 'Storante al Giardino, I went early,  
Saw the performers come : him, her, the baby,  
A quiet and respectable-tawdry trio ;  
An hour later : a show of calves and spangles,

"*Un e due fanno tre*,"

Night after night,

No change, no change of program, "*Chè!*  
*La donna è mobile*."

# Homage to Quintus Septimius Florentis Christianus

(*Ex libris Graecae*)

## I

THEODORUS will be pleased at my death,  
And someone else will be pleased at the death of  
Theodorus,  
And yet everyone speaks evil of death.

## II

This place is the Cyprian's, for she has ever the  
fancy  
To be looking out across the bright sea,  
Therefore the sailors are cheered, and the waves  
Keep small with reverence, beholding her image.

*Anyte.*

## III

A sad and great evil is the expectation of death—  
And there are also the inane expenses of the  
funeral;  
Let us therefore cease from pitying the dead  
For after death there comes no other calamity.

*Palladas.*

## HOMAGE

### IV

#### *Troy*

Whither, O city, are your profits and your gilded  
shrines,  
And your barbecues of great oxen,  
And the tall women walking your streets, in gilt  
clothes,  
With their perfumes in little alabaster boxes ?  
Where is the work of your home-born sculptors ?  
Time's tooth is into the lot, and war's and fate's  
too.  
Envy has taken your all,  
Save your douth and your story.

*Agathas Scholasticus.*

### V

Woman ? Oh, woman is a consummate rage,  
but dead, or asleep, she pleases.  
Take her. She has two excellent seasons.

*Palladas.*

### VI

#### *Nicharcus upon Phidon his doctor*

Phidon neither purged me, nor touched me,  
But I remembered the name of his fever medicine  
and died.



## Fish and the Shadow

THE salmon-trout drifts in the stream,  
The soul of the salmon-trout floats over the  
stream

Like a little wafer of light.

The salmon moves in the sun-shot, bright shallow  
sea. . . .

As light as the shadow of the fish  
that falls through the water,  
She came into the large room by the stair,  
Yawning a little she came with the sleep still  
upon her.

“I am just from bed. The sleep is still in my  
eyes.

“Come. I have had a long dream.”

And I: “That wood ?  
And two springs have passed us.”

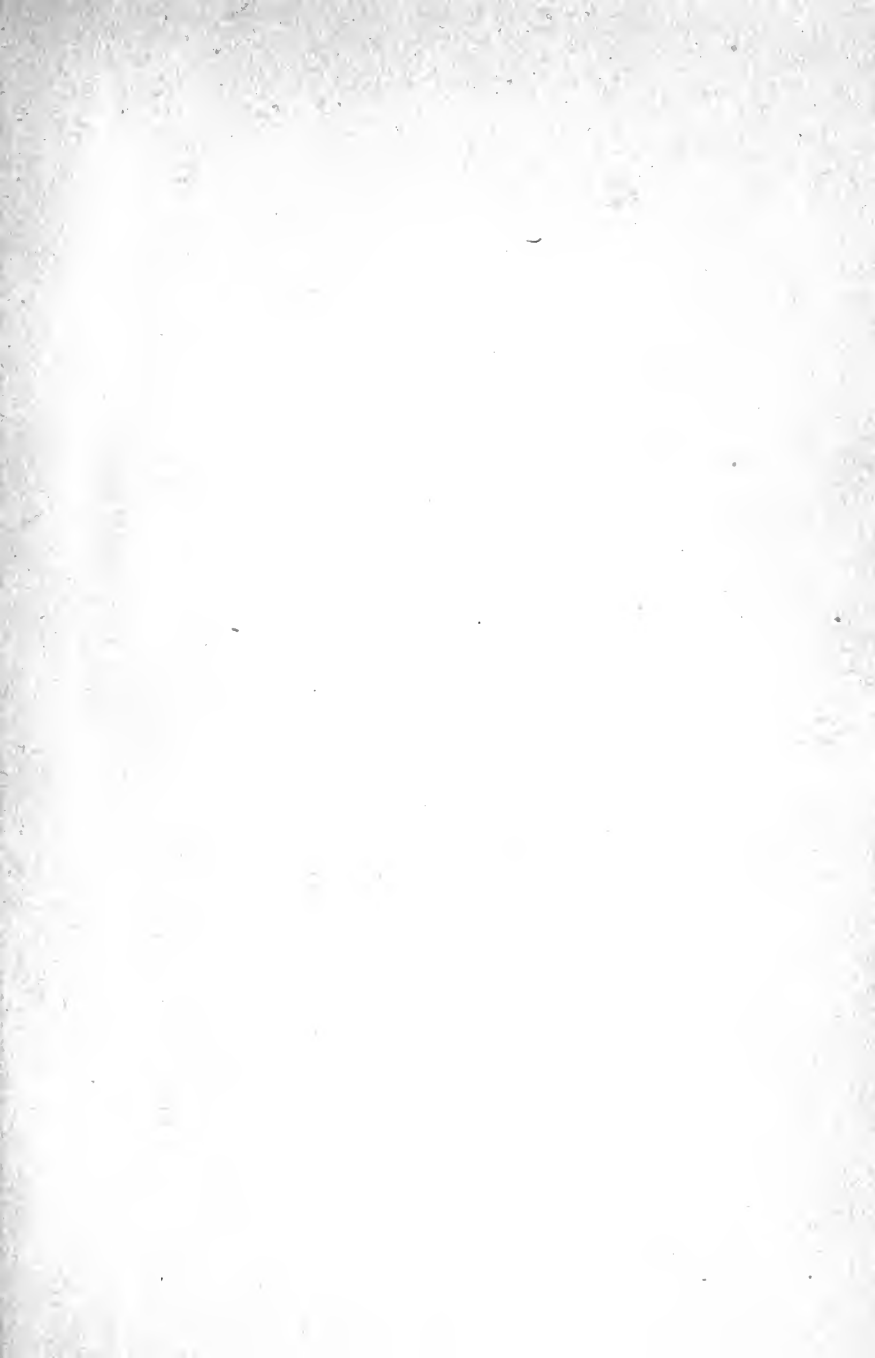
## FISH AND THE SHADOW

“Not so far, no, not so far now,  
There is a place—but no one else knows it—  
A field in a valley . . .

*Qu'ieu sui avinen,  
Ieu lo sai.”*

She must speak of the time  
Of Arnaut de Mareuil, I thought, “*qu'ieu sui  
avinen.*”

Light as the shadow of the fish  
That falls through the pale green water.



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L8

1916



ERIC MATHEWS  
LONDON