

A QUINZAINÉ FOR
THIS YULE



Being selected from a
Venetian sketch-book
—“San Trovaso” —

— BY —
EZRA POUND

To
The Aube of the West Dawn.

BEAUTY should never be presented explained. It is Marvel and Wonder, and in art we should find first these doors—Marvel and Wonder—and, coming through them, a slow understanding (slow even though it be a succession of lightning understandings and perceptions) as of a figure in mist, that still and ever gives to each one his own right of believing, each after his own creed and fashion.

Always the desire to know and to understand more deeply must precede any reception of beauty. Without holy curiosity and awe none find her, and woe to that artist whose work wears its "heart on its sleeve."

WESTON ST. LLEWMYS.

PRELUDE.

Over the Ognisanti.

HIGH-DWELLING 'bove the people here,
Being alone with beauty most the while,
Lonely?

How can I be,
Having mine own great thoughts for paladins
Against all gloom and woe and every bitterness?

Also have I tie swallows and the sunset
And I see much life below me,

In the garden, on the waters,
And hither float the shades of songs they sing
To sound of wrinkled mandolin, and splash of waters,
Which shades of song re-echoed
Within that somewhile barreu hall, my heart,
Are found as I transcribe them following.

Night Litany.

O Dieu, purifiez nos cœurs !
purifiez nos cœurs !

Yea the lines hast thou laid unto me
in pleasant places,
And the beauty of this thy Venice
hast thou shewn unto me
Until its loveliness become unto me
a thing of tears.

O God, what great kindness
have we done in times past
and forgotton it,
That thou givest this wonder unto us,
O God of waters ?

O God of the night
What great sorrow
Cometh unto us,
That thou thus repayest us
Before the time of its coming ?

O God of silence,
Purifiez nos cœurs
Purifiez nos cœurs
For we have seen
The glory of the shadow of the
likeness of thine handmaid,
Yea, the glory of the shadow
of thy Beauty hath walked

Upon the shadow of the waters
In this thy Venice.
And before the holliness
Of the shadow of thy handmaid
Have I hidden mine eyes,
O God of waters.

O God of silence,
Purifiez nos coeurs,
Purifiez nos coeurs,
O God of waters,
make clean our hearts within us
And our lips to show forth thy praise,
For I have seen the
shadow of this thy Venice
floating upon the waters,
And thy stars
have seen this thing out of their far courses
have they seen this thing,
O God of waters.
Even as are thy stars
Silent unto us in their far-coursing,
Even so is mine heart
become silent within me.

(Fainter)

Purifiez nos coeurs
O God of the silence,
Purifiez nos coeurs
O God of waters.

Purveyors General.

PRAISE to the lonely ones !
Give praise out of your ease
To them whom the farther seas
Bore out from amongst you.

We, that through all the world
Have wandered seeking new things
And quaint tales, that your ease
May gather such dreams as please
you, the Home-stayers.

We, that through chaos have hurled
Our souls riven and burning,
Torn, mad, even as windy seas
Have we been, that your ease
Should keep bright amongst you :

That new tales and strange peoples
Such as the further seas
Wash on the shores of,
That new mysteries and increase
Of sunlight should be amongst you,
you, the home-stayers.

Ever for these things, driven from you,
Have we, drinking the utmost lees
Of all the world's wine and sorrowing
Gone forth from out your ease,
 And borrowing
Out of all lands and realms
 of the infinite,
New tales, new mysteries,
New songs from out the breeze
That maketh soft the far evenings,
Have brought back these things
 Unto your ease,
Yours unto whom peace is given.

Aube of the West Dawn. Venetian June.

*From the Tale "How Malrin chose for his Lady the reflection
of the Dawn and was thereafter true to her."*

WHEN svelte the dawn reflected in the west,
As did the sky slip off her robes of night,
I see to stand mine armouress confessed,
Then doth my spirit know himself aright,
And tremulous against her faint-flushed breast
Doth cast him quivering, her bondsman quite.

When I the dawn reflected in the west,
Fragile and maiden to my soul have pressed,
Pray I, her mating hallowed in God's sight,
That none asunder me with bale of might
From her whose lips have bade mine own be blest,
My bride, "The dawn reflected in the west."

I think from such perceptions as this arose the ancient myths of the demi-gods; As from such as that in "The Tree" (A Lume Spew), the myths of metamorphosis.

To La Contessa Bianzafior (cent. xiv.)

(Defense at parting).

I.

AND all who read these lines shall love her then
Whose laud is all their burthen, and whose praise
Is in my heart forever, tho' my lays
But stumble and grow startled dim again
When I would bid them, mid the courts of men,
Stand and take judgment. Whoso in new days
Shall read this script, or wander in the ways
My heart hath gone, shall praise her then.

Knowing this thing, "White Flower," I bid thy
thought
Turn toward what thing a singer's love should be ;
Stood I within thy gates and went not on,
One poor fool's love were all thy gueredon.
I go—my song upon the winds set free—
And lo !

A thousand souls to thine are brought.

II.

“**T**HIS fellow mak’th his might seem over strong !”

? Hath there a singer trod our dusty ways
And left not twice this hoard to weep her praise,
Whose name was made the glory of his song ?

Hear ye, my peers ! Judge ye, if I be wrong.
Hath Lesbia more love than all Catullus’ days
Should’ve counted her of love ? Tell me where strays
Her poet now, what ivory gates among ?

Think ye ? Ye think it not ; my vaunt o’er bold ?
Hath Deirdre, or Helen, or Beatrys,
More love than to maid unsung there is ?

Be not these other hearts, when his is cold,
That seek thy soul with ardor manifold,
A better thing than were the husk of his ?

III.

IV.

Partenza di Venezia.

N'ER felt I parting from a woman loved
As feel I now my going forth from thee,
Yea, all thy waters cry out "Stay with me!"
And laugh reflected flames up luringly.

O elf-tale land that I three months have known,
Vice of dreams, if where the storm-wrack drave
As some uncertain ghost upon the wave,
For cloud thou hidest and then fitfully
For light and half-light feign'st reality,
If first we fear the dim dread of the unknown
Then reassured for the calm clear tone
"I am no spirit. Fear not me!"

As once the twelve storm-tossed on Galline
Put off their fear yet came not nigh
Unto the holier mystery,
So we bewildered, yet have trust in thee,
And thus thou, Venice,
show'st thy mastery.

Lucifer Caditurus.

By service clomb I heaven
And the law that smites the spheres,
Turning their courses even,
Served me as I serve God.

And sha' ail fears
Of chaos or this hell the Mover dreams—
Because *he knows* what is to me yet dim—
Bid me to plod
An huckster of the sapphire beams
From star to star
Giving to each his small embraced desire,
Shall I not bear this light
Unto what far
Unheavened bourne shall meet my fire
With some toward sympathy
That wills not rule ?

By service clomb I heaven
And the Law served me, even
As I serve God ; but shall this empery
Bid me restrict my course, or plod
A furrow worker in a space-set sod
Or turn the emeralds of the empyrean
Because I dread some pale remorse
Should gnaw the sinews of m' effulgent soul
Deigned I to break His bonds
That hold the law ?

Sandalphon.

AND these about me die,
Because the pain of the infinite singing
Slayeth them.
Ye that have sung of the pain of the earth-hoard's
age-long crusading,
Ye know somewhat the strain,
the sad-sweet wonder-pain of such singing.
And therefore ye know after what fashion
This singing hath power destroying.

Yea, these about me, bearing such song in homage
Unto the Mover of Circles,
Die for the might of their praising,
And the autumn of their marcescent wings
Maketh ever new loam for my forest ;
And these grey ash trees hold within them
All the secrets of whatso things
They dreamed before their praises,
And in this grove my flowers,
Fruit of prayerful powers,
Have first their thought of life
And then their being.

Ye marvel that I die not ! *forsitan !*
Thinking me kin with such as may not weep,
Thinking me part of them that die for praising
—yea, tho' it be praising,
past the power of man's mortality to
dream or name its phases,
—yea, tho' it chaunt and paean
past the might of earth-dwelt
soul to think on,
—yea, tho' it be praising
as these the winged ones die of.

Ye think me one insensate
 else die I also
Sith these about me die,
and if I, watching
ever the multiplex jewel, of beryl and jasper
 and sapphire
Make of these prayers of earth ever new flowers ;
Marvel and wonder !
Marvel and wonder even as I,
Giving to prayer new language
and causing the works to speak
of the earth-hoard's age-lasting longing,
Even as I marvel and wonder, and know not,
Yet keep my watch in the ash wood.

Note on Sandalphon.

THE angel of prayer according to the Talmud stands unmoved among the angels of wind and fire, who die as their one song is finished, also as he gathers the prayers they turn to flowers in his hands.

Longfellow also treats of this, but as a legend rather than a reality.

Fortunatus.

RESISTLESS, unresisting, as some swift spear upon
the flood

Follow'th the river's course and tarryes not
But hath the stream's might for its on-sped own,
So towards my triumph, and so reads the will,
'Gainst which I will not, or mine eyes grow dim,
And dim they seem not, nor are willed to be.
For beauty greet'th them through your London rain,
That were of Adriatic beauty loved and won,
And though I seek all exile, yet my heart
Doth find new friends and all strange lands
Love me and grow my kin, and bid me speed.

CAUGHT sometimes in the current of strange happiness, borne upon such winds as Dante beheld whirling the passion-pale shapes in the nether-gloom *; so here in the inner sunlight, or above cool, dew-green pasture lands, and again in caves of the azure magic.

WESTON ST. LLEWMY

* "*E paion sì al vento esser leggieri.*"

"*Ombre portate dalla detta briga.*"

Beddoesque.

—— and going heavenward leaves
An opal spray to wake. a track that gleams
With new-old runes and magic of past time
Caught from the sea deep of the whole man-soul,
The "mantra" of our craft, that to the sun,
New brought and broken by the fearless keel,
That were but part of all the sun-smit sea,
Have for a space their individual being,
And do seem as things apart from all Time's hoard,
The great whole liquid jewel of God's truth.

Greek Epigram.

DAY and night are never weary,
Nor yet is God of creating
For day and night their torch-bearers
The aube and the crepuscule.

So, when I weary of praising the dawn and the sunset,
Let me be no more counted among the immortals ;
But number me amid the wearying ones,
Let me be a man as the herd,
And as the slave that is given in barter.

Christophori Columbi Tumulus.

*(From the Latin of Hipolytus Capilupus,
Early Cent. MDC.)*

GENOAN, glory of Italy, Columbus thou sure light,
Alas the urn takes even thee so soon out-blown,
Its little space

Doth hold thee, whom Oceanus had not the might
Within his folds to hold, altho' his broad embrace
Doth hold all lands.

Bark-borne beyond his boundries unto Hind thou wast
Where scarce Fames volant self the way had cast.

To T. H.

The Amphora.

BRING me this day some poet of the past,
Some unknown shape amid the wonder lords !
Yea of such wine as all time's store affords
From rich amphoræ that nor years can blast
With might of theirs and blows down-rained fast,
Falernian and Massic of the Roman hoards,
I've drunk the best that any land accords,
Yet dread the time that I shall drink the last.

Bring me this day from out the smoky room
Some curved clay guardian of untasted wine,
That holds the sun at heart. Search i' the gloom
Boy, well, and mark you that the draught be good.
Then as an answer to this jest of mine,
Luck brought th' amphora, and the clasp was "HOOD."

Histrion.

NO man hath dared to write this thing as yet,
And yet I know, how that the souls of all men great
At times pass through us,
And we are melted into them, and are not
Save reflexions of their souls.
Thus am I Dante for a space and am
One Francois Villon, ballad-lord and thief
Or am such holy ones I may not write,
Lest blasphemy be writ against my name ;
This for an instant and the flame is gone.

'Tis as in midmost us there glows a sphere
Translucent, molten gold, that is the " I "
And into this some form projects itself :
Christus, or John, or eke the Florentine ;
And as the clear space is not if a form's
Imposed thereon,
So cease we from all being for the time,
And these, the Masters of the Soul, live on.

Nel Biancheggjar.

BLUE-GREY, and white, and white-of-rose,
The flowers of the West's fore-dawn unclose.
I feel the dusky softness whirr
of color, as upon a dulcimer
"Her" dreaming fingers lay between the tunes,
As when the living music swoons
But dies not quite, because for love of us
—knowing our state
How that 'tis troublous—
It wills not die to leave us desolate.

*With thanks to Marco Londonio for his delightful
Italian paraphrase of these lines appearing in "La
Bauta" for Aug. 9th.*

December, 1908.

Printed and Published by
POLLOCK & Co.,
81 MORTIMER STREET,
LONDON, W.