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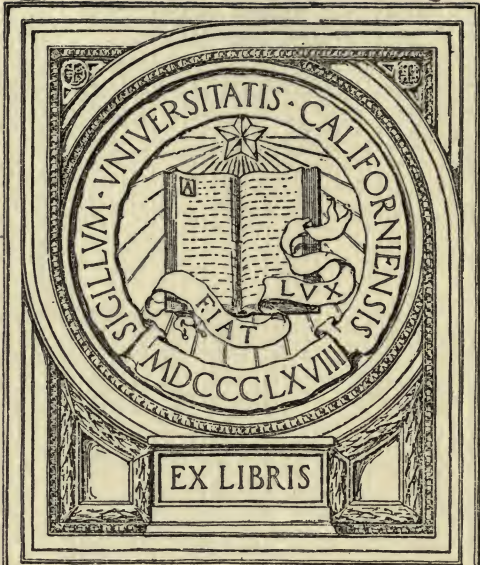
SYNCOPIATION  

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LELAND

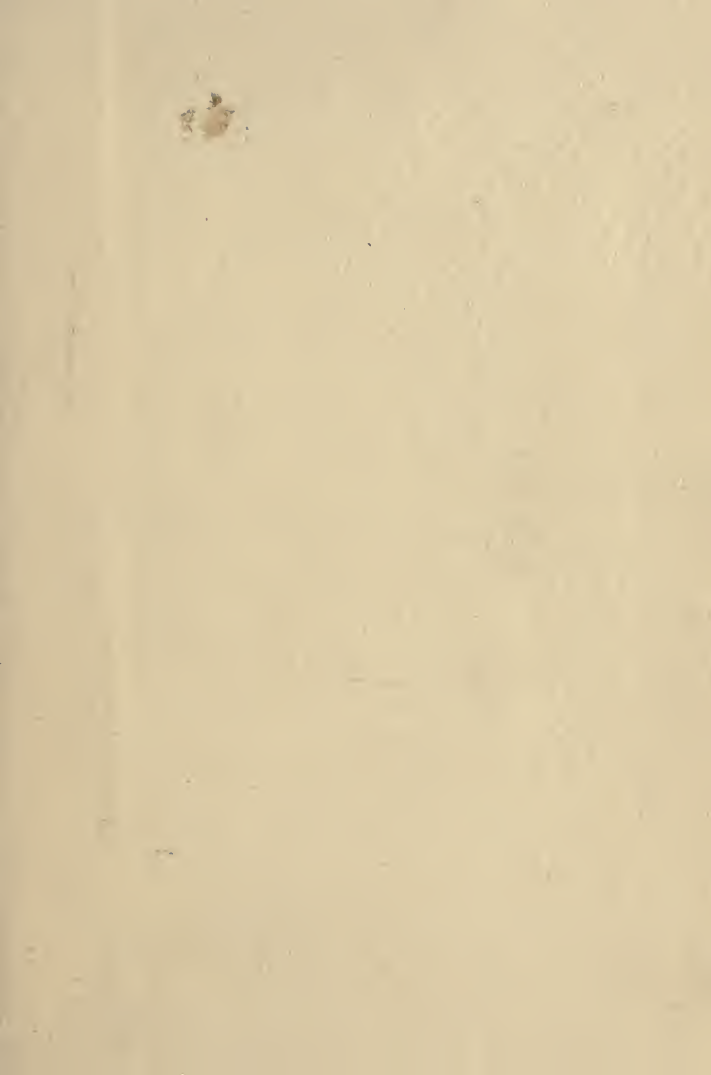
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# SYNCOPIATION

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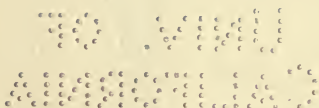
LELAND



*BOSTON*

THE POETRY-DRAMA COMPANY

1919



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**The Poetry-Drama Company**

SYNCOPE

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## SYNCPATION

There by the river that first fair day of Spring  
Or in the vague romance of a city night  
Always your face before me.  
What was the night? I remember you,  
The blue of your eyes,  
The wistfulness of your flesh  
Somewhere in the city  
Looking down upon the park  
Moonlight and the monotone of people in the streets  
Or over a café table on a Sabbath afternoon;  
August, a secret room beside the sea  
Far off the throb of 'cellos and the lilt of lithe violins  
Cinematic, transitory. . . memories of glamored days,  
Flashes from romanced nights  
Sagan's at Christmas . . . and heard your voice again  
A damask room, lights dim  
And tearing the silks and laces  
That half-concealed your beauty . . . Traffic  
And the drone of plodding men below  
Fools, fools they were, but naught could tell them so . . .  
May-flower road, a car, what was the year?  
Citylight palloring your frail, wanton face  
Your eager flesh that sobbed with quick desire . . .  
A song to Eros . . . a dance to Syncopa . . . our  
symphony of life vivacious . . .

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Autumn... the rush of crowds... the caress of color.  
Obbligato to our youth . . .

I touched your hand and you swayed

There is pleasure

Catch it, snatch it

Through a snowfall arm in arm

Don't worry, dear, there is no harm

Hold me that way,

Ardente!

The vagrant loves are all that live . . .

Climbing apartment stairs eagerly

Opening doors into soft, cerise bedrooms

Lovers of mine

Breathing their perfume, sensing their lure

Here we'll be happy . . . the world pauses

Transient, inconsequent

Cherishing only the illusions of the here-and-now . . .

April, a Colonial inn, the town historic,

Staid in the legends and landmarks of antiquity;

Why did I first possess you there?

Pagans of the contemporary in the land of the  
Puritans.

The ironic verve of it had a thrill to eternally  
dramatize the night, the month, the year

Flesh and spirit . . . the old hymns yielding to a  
madder syncopation.

Looking out that night upon the relict square

Elthia, beloved. . . beauty at last

The radiant flower of passion triumphant over the  
fetid garbage of the Puritanage;



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Historic, dear?

Our night of passion made it so . . .

September again . . . cadenza . . . youth silks by.

Turnpike, camisole, café chartreuse

Through the park and up the river

Staccato whispering, your voice all fire and desire.

Sudden . . . swaying . . . soft buff through pastel pink

Quick continuity

Life is so short; can you capture it.

Furious, curious, insatiate

Why do you always want to kiss me in public.

Stop, they're looking. You're darling. You order.

It's cute here, isn't it. All stucco.

Now your hand at a matinée

We hug our secret.

Here's a Florentine inn

Sit in this alcove and I'll tell you why the whimsical  
is never art.

Hush, dear,

Tis better you're illiterate of all but love;

The more the pretension, the less the charm.

Snap out that light and climb in —

I love that chemise

As delicate and restiff as your arms;

Kiss me like that again,

I'll make an artist of you yet . . .

Let's take the canoe and paddle down the river;

Sorbet, nougat and the latest records; and if you're  
good

We'll snug in at Jansen's for a canter and a cognac.

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Yes, the river's historic  
But don't throw that bottle overboard  
They've passed laws against it.  
Let's paddle over to the shade and lie in close.  
This day will soon be over.  
There's the 5.26 on the bridge  
The clock watchers' special from the hive of industry,  
As the dailies say.  
You know, Fran, I'd rather be an idler here  
Than the greatest schwab that ever cleaned a Street;  
We'll tarry the carry at Jacot's, and check out.  
I've got the roadster there . . . a little whirl to  
    Sorncroft.  
Now give me your hand, dear; there's a mirror.  
It'll make a hundred an' ten; five gears forward;  
    some bus . . .  
What a pretty town . . . slow down a bit.  
Yes, the white old-Colonial somehow thrills . . .  
A Wayside inn . . . now there's tradition —  
I'd like to take over the place, put a live revue in  
    there,  
Get Art to write some sway songs,  
A cute chorus of twelve, three principals,  
And speed the intimate all over the room;  
Open up the taproom, dust out the chambers,  
And stock the buffet with some rare Margaux —  
Wouldn't old Longfellow turn over once or twice;  
Twould be a new thrill anyway, and that's what  
    counts . . .  
Spring in Philistia,

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Do you remember, Sestra?  
Motoring through the provinces  
Amused at their petty rule of rote  
Sunday evening to a little village church,  
Dégagé agnostics  
To their great Lord God, the Jesuschrist.  
Your hand in mine as during prayer  
I half-slept and dreamed:  
As if one drab Sabbath  
You had come down the dun-lined aisle  
A radiant flash of orange-rose charmeuse,  
Frailly exotic, naively sensual,  
Slender, silken legs  
Straight to the pulpit  
And suddenly warm, tender arms  
Clasped the startled pastor,  
Your eyes a pagan flame of carnal promise;  
Then quickly your lightly-perfumed lips on his —  
Releasing him with an amused faire débonnaire,  
A pirouette on the platform edge  
Then with a rippling mime step  
Lightly past the pens of the oafish phils and phlegs —  
A youthful, laughing, romanced vision of beauty,  
Composite anathema of their life entire . . .  
And is it not an easy quest of beauty,  
Merely to love all that the pureswine hate;  
To search out from the slag-heap of their disap-  
proval  
The brilliant jewels of beauty;  
Scrape from them the rusty coatings of their bans,

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And see them splendent at last,  
Vividly, intensely beautiful . . .  
Then fling our challenge madly, gladly down  
At ways and days and praise of men;  
Was beauty duty; then laughed their sophistries to  
scorn.

Ah, let them mouth their mob moralities  
They could not sense the splendor of a dream;  
Pledge them a smile, chérie, as we pass on  
And leave their laws as trampled dust  
Upon the road of our rebellion . . .

June evening, and lights of the ships at sea,  
A motor-inn on the Arnton road —  
Could I ever forget your words that night:

Well, be a genius

And a hundred years from now, when you're a long  
time dead,

Some fatandforty matron will enrapture the  
Woman's Club

Reading jems from your work.

Was it to bring them a douche of beauty;

An eternal curtsy to their gods of tin and pewter . . .

Across the railside cemetery, over the sorden marsh

And the squant gastanks

Stood the factories —

Be a poet,

There's a pretty garret for you;

An oak commode in a crumbling attic over a reeking  
delicatessen —

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Thank you, but Ambre Evette has a more tangible  
thrill . . .

Looks like a nice job;

But I want the body old-rose and the wheels of  
silver-white;

All right, send me the sketches for approval —

That line of windshield and cowl; it must be so;

And don't forget the nine special lights

And the buffet by the dash . . .

Swing your hips, beckon,

Lift your eyes slyly, pirouette;

You are charming, little ones,

Vivid virgins of a first blooming —

Thank your Gods, my dears, for me;

That I never let tragedy stalk into your romance —

That the blooming never bore fruit . . .

Sentimentalist . . . well rather

I enjoy it . . . it thrills me

Legs always allured me . . . silken . . . seductive

Then the body . . . the face . . . it has to be pretty.

A trifle degenerate perhaps —

Yes indeed . . . that thrills me too . . .

Bohemian in the land of the Puristines,

Aristocrat to their clown mobility,

Pagan to their spawning instinct,

Poet born out of time . . .

And then when fame came,

Well, a Swift end to them —

The dream triumphs . . . . .

Cause, custom, curriculum, current event;

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Bankers and bakers, preachers and fakirs.  
Here are your bans — I circle them easily,  
Your laws I evade cleverly,  
Your taboos I detour adroitly . . .  
Somewhere they crossed my path  
The senile moralists  
In their everlasting discordance of "Naughty,  
naughty;"  
The empty prints forever stuffed with the tedious  
sobbing of the slob sisters;  
The old-maid mummies of the virtuous, hating the  
beautiful,  
Jealous of life and those who loved;  
Critics female, neuter, epicene . . . a cynic smile for  
all of you;  
Your decorous dirges already tire . . .  
The drama of the trivial sublime,  
A slapstick scherzo for the gods:  
Pale pastors from the provinces frocking by,  
Bramae browsing, purists sniffing,  
Gelid spinsters reading over their teacups,  
A member of the Law-and-Order Committee peering  
into a suspected vintner's —  
Was this the worship of beauty?  
Poets polishing pallid verse in dreary hall-rooms,  
Hucksters yawning over the evening paper,  
Dirty children bawling in street-cars,  
Shoe-buyers herding off to take in a show,  
A side-street preacher in a hell of a fury over Hell,  
A semidemi crying over a blasted life,

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A financier enravished with a red-blood story,  
An art student idylling at the museum, —  
Epic, indeed!  
Twould make a ripping novel for the story-tellers,  
The plodding plothawks,  
The histrionic historians of the commonplace . . .  
I saw him on the train, a 2/8's mind was all he had,  
Reading the investment pages greedily,  
Squinting face and fishy eyes;  
His wife one of those women who make virtue a  
    virtue  
And ugliness beauty . . . both of them average and  
    there's the comedy . . .  
The musty mould of a small-town Baptist church;  
Rusting tin and rotting wood,  
Rancid carpets and reasty cellars;  
The hollow hokum of the righteous creed,  
The petty pulpiteers forever gibbering the glory of  
    God;  
Pious, rut-worn devoutists  
Endlessly shouting their damns and shams . . .  
Out of wind-swept city streets into cosy taverns  
    tedesco,  
Perfumed and furred in February,  
And saw her face go white like years that die —  
Or words to that effect . . .  
Sometime, vaguely,  
Whirling down from the mountains with Eralie.  
Through a village quickly, hand to nose;  
Small-town toilers mill-bound Monday morn.

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A city and the burring twang of traffic.  
A street, a shop, a workroom,  
The dull, lacklustre eyes of those who rise at six.  
Apricots and prunes.  
Its horrible injustice and all that sort of thing . . .  
And one there was who seemed so like my Lyria;  
Life was so dreary, drab —  
Seduction at least would be eventful.  
It was . . .  
On the Avenue they're putting out a canopy for  
Cordelia,  
She only came out six or seven months ago;  
Her father is the Blank of Blank & Blank-Blank  
With offices and boardroom on the street;  
Tis said their tastes are simple . . . they are . . .  
Go make your pile in your asstigmatic way  
And leave it to your college or your school;  
That's all your life is, all it means to you.  
Here's your reward . . . go, take it to your grave, —  
Someday, mayhap, a verdant college calf may scratch  
a match upon your bust . . .  
Afternoon in the public library,  
The great unwashed rag-picking for an education;  
Forever turning the classic pages,  
Inhaling the must and rot of ages . . .  
"And Johnny's doin' awfully well,  
Though he's not as smart as Ned." Do tell!  
"Ned is a better scholar, yes."  
Now isn't that nice; well, I should guess . . .  
And saw them huddled at the grim machines —



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Slaves, and so forth . . . "God! Was it right!"  
Well, what was right, or was there God.  
The lyric calls —  
Had I time to be dominie and tell Mayme there aint  
    none . . .  
And saw the critics dipping pointless pens,  
"Now this is bad, and this is best,"  
Each one as futile as the rest . . .  
Spring again:  
Simple squaws shaking blankets from balconies of  
    stock-ugly three-deckers,  
Snow melting from french-roofed houses;  
And I still can hear the old man's voice, and see him  
Worn out with family cares and business burdens:  
"What are your intentions, my boy; are they hon-  
    orable?"  
And in my heart was sudden cynic pity,  
For already I had taken his daughter . . .  
The sadly stupid, drab and dreary,  
How they weary me;  
A brass-band screaming down the street  
With colors flying;  
The herding instinkt . . . small-towns and sewing  
    circles.  
Ladies and the Whitman Club . . . Odd fellahs and  
    odder women —  
But never odd, more's the pity — merely people —  
And so it goes;  
They still believed in church

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And lifted weary eyes to the long-deferred sal-  
vation . . .

Into a restaurant at noontime,  
Mothers material watching over prim daughters  
decorous

With the eyes of the hawk and the face of the lynx.  
Velma Vergen, what a name for a nymph  
Someday . . . soon —

Well, your début was charming . . .  
A keener thrill . . . a deeper sensing  
Tis all that matters.

And leave to the metric purists  
The vapid husks of the vicarious —  
Sex is all . . .

Autumn . . . and leaves falling on the quadrangle  
of the alma material;

Campus days and all that sort of rot.

The griping nausea of the stunted minds,  
The tedious tradition of professorial ignorance;  
Who wouldn't sicken there,

Conning their senescent formulae . . .

A bold joke in a burlesque show —

Not enough comedy . . . too many dance specialties,  
and the plot needs bracing.

Didactic? Sure. Let's go to a movie;

Sit in and watch them suck the saccharine,

Swill the syrup, lap the lollipop.

Life well deserves one happy ending —

A fade-out to this luscious "art" . . .

The kind of man who runs a newspaper,

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A dodding stagnentity, prude-souled and puritan-  
idealed,

A platonic platitude adrift.

The fabled glory of the press;

Another merry rabble-gabble mess.

The mob, and as the leaders read, so runs the  
flock . . .

And he's a great man in the Town.

A banker-pillar of the church,

A face steeped in business . . . a whiskered hypo-  
crite.

He never drops the mask, the pose . . . it pays;

Tell him what an ass he is, and see his guard go  
down . . .

And passion prolétaire:

Tis Saturday night . . . the moralist a'tingle

Races home to the breasts of his Agnes,

Thrice mounts her casually, then falls asleep.

Evil-minded — where did I hear that word before;

Who said it?

Some prude squeaking falsetto from a sewer —

Clarence, recite!

Camera . . . the silhouette spectacle flickers for a  
while, then fades . . . . .

Ambition always.

What was the stage?

I stood there singing

But I remember only a blur of ecstatic faces

And a fierce desire to cry at them, "Go home."

One and all they hailed me master,

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Crowding the dressing-room when the opus ended.  
I heard them buzzing and caught words of:  
"Genius, greatest artist of the age."  
Artist? I denied it . . . how could it be . . . the  
opera an art!  
By the bessemer idols of the republic — No.  
Utterly devoid of power or poignancy,  
The very reason of it all — the theme —  
Shallow, outworn plot pretension;  
The art of mistaken identity, bricàbrac scenery and  
mouldy costume plates.  
Where was the master, the librettist, with a theme  
supreme;  
Then it would be art, and singing beauty . . . . .  
Another day, another hour,  
A white arc of faces and lentezza violins  
As I betrayed the second-maid to the chupchup of the  
maternal gum-chewers . . . lovers of the drama.  
A blue-and-orange poster on that theatre wall;  
One arm about her waist, the other pressing her  
down,  
Lip-to-lip, her head thrown back in passionate sur-  
render —  
A six-sheet tribute to the lure of love,  
Eye-enticement for the yokelry;  
Ring down this curtain; damn, I should have fixed  
this 'script;  
Why should I have to stay on till the close, and clasp  
this loricated clothes-rack for a curtain.  
Could this be glamor?

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Night after night, day after day,  
Mouthing these varnished lines;  
The same, inane farrago of words, with that silly  
tag —  
A caramel catering to the canaille.  
Acting of greatness, acting of genius — for these  
Beotians!  
Ever the artist of words,  
Equally triumphant over the twelvemo pantry-  
enchanters  
And the academic, campus-cultured stalewits.  
Whenever one of these chillpens  
Feels a twinge of doubt as to his importance in  
Letters  
He hastily summons his brothers to conclave,  
And they speedily form a Society,  
Conferring upon themselves  
Celebrity, Supereminence and Renown;  
The elemental press soberly chronicles the event,  
And the farce fades to bathos. —  
An amused shrug as they pass on to their oblivion . . .  
And I who knew all, probed all, saw all clearly,  
Their petty strivings and my great ideal, —  
Could I cut it to their format  
And slap it out to the 87½ climacteric critics of the  
periodic press . . .  
Only self counts,  
And that's why your book failed,  
Your poetry, your drama.  
You photograph mediocrity;

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I probe self, and triumph —  
That is my supremacy . . .  
Born the lover, and found women utterly atonic;  
Born the poet, and forever heard the multitude re-  
citing the dainty doggerel of the day;  
Born the actor, and saw the theatre barren of art,  
a tawdid thing of real estate . . .  
Here again the emollient sex has given art the leni-  
tive.  
The torpid, turgid tribe  
Cramming the presses and galleries  
With their gargoyled grotesques, their drooping imi-  
tations,  
Their self-confessed ignorances of life and beauty . . .  
Women who talk of the passion grande,  
Failing and paling to futility . . .  
Lover supreme when no women loved,  
Sensualist ever to their lyric lure;  
Seeking the epic — and finding only doggerel.  
From brothel to boudoir,  
Making the descent easily,  
And all I captured was an eager imperfection.  
Sad eyes pleading wistfully, hopeful and hesitant,  
And no Pierrette for Pierrot . . . well, a smile for that;  
They all run nicely to form — and on schedule —  
Another'll be along in a minute.  
Bold cues from Avenue cuties,  
Veiled, awkward looks from matrons over teacups, —  
Was this the cost of being beautiful?  
Or was it . . . well, here is the drab composite:

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An actress, famous as it were,  
But she couldn't act . . . I learned that soon.  
She was one of those women  
Who make capital of the burnejones parable for the  
    long-eared garishtocracy;  
About her an exoticism of the East—side,  
With a crafty, Semitic talent for business;  
And she took a good photograph—  
But a lover! Boutade bathetique!  
Her cheapness sickened . . . a sublimated shopgirl  
With the heredity of the lowest peasantry.  
She pecked her kisses parrot-like;  
Impassioned she made delicious, gurgling sounds,  
Prattling about the wonder of it all;  
And to this day she wonders why I fled from  
    her . . . . .

A notorable woman writer,  
Supposed to be sensational in amour.  
You read her trush between covers; they blurb it out  
    by the yard.

A half-thought that perhaps she'd be intense;  
She seemed to have sophistication.  
Well, she utterly lacked passion;  
Loved like a colleggirl sparked or a flapper frivved.  
I still shudder at the way she had  
Of clutching me by the lapel, and simping,  
"Kiss me, darling," her mouth puckered like an  
    ingénue's . . .

Quick conquest, swifter boredom.  
Kiss an' tell . . . hell . . . . .

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A painter — by grace of a dictionary,  
Smuggling her stupid question  
One night in her gairish studio,  
“ Possession or desire, which is most beautiful? ”  
The clinquant dilettante trembling in my arms.  
Why couldn't I have taken her grotesquery for a warning  
Before I pushed her over —  
She was as passive as a verb.  
And so it goes —  
Aesthete, harlot, goodwife, duchess;  
An absolutist ever,  
Had I patience to be forever guiding them past the  
trivial.  
Another . . . the fatras press dubbed her  
“ The famous society leader. ”  
She had one foot in a blast-furnace,  
The other in a peerage,  
And lacked the wit to know there was nothing  
between them.  
Her monosyllabled idea of the scheme of things  
might have been lisped by a débutante.  
She thought Indian music and baseball adorable,  
Europe a synonym for art,  
The world created for optimists,  
And all the other stock puerilities of the provinces.  
I suppose she even thought me a brute when I left  
her.  
Well, I was a snob and proud of it; a brusq in a world  
of bores . . .  
March, mud and manhattan;



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The vivid poetry of industry,  
The mighty dreamers of commerce —  
Juvenal, fox-trot!  
Selfmade illiterates crowding the prints, too doltish  
to know the joke's on them.  
Drygoods aristocrat, toady and sucker,  
Drop-shop patrician, proletarian, mucker, —  
When they think, they stink.  
Always the delicacy of Jasmin or Muguet,  
The subtle essences that served another purpose  
besides the sensual —  
Less beautiful, but vastly more utilitarian —  
Forever to keep the stench of their atrophy from  
contracting my nostrils . . .  
Downtown that roaring travesty they call Big  
Business,  
And wonder why a poet cannot write it down;  
Could they but know,  
So great is the grime and slime of it,  
Tis all a poet could do to live it down.  
Madrigals to machinery, sonnets to soap,  
Lyrics to textiles, teething-rings and tungsten!  
An endless vomit of system . . .  
Genius in a land of technicians,  
Ego in a perpetual rigmarole of science —  
Company, corporation, factory, shop,  
Whistled my fingers at its cheap pretension . . .  
“And this book of yours;  
Somehow it's pitched too high; too rosy; too ro-  
mantic.”

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Well, did I dip my pen for fools,  
The feeble statusquo of age.  
Romantic, to be sure . . . and always so,  
As long as the intensity of youth makes art supreme.  
My life both lyric and epic,  
And I pen it as I please . . .  
Could satire melt the filthy film of your aggregated  
    ignorance,  
Or irony drive a wedge of wisdom into your gaping,  
    babbling mouths,—  
The pen trembles before the task.  
The din of the rabble swarming along,  
There was your romance, and there was your  
    song . . .  
People, people, people,  
Come, let me put you in the book,  
The lithe libretto of my life;  
Stand in your place, and take the lines I give you;  
Wear the fool's cap, mouth the dummy's part,  
I direct; you play the mummy's part:  
Mildewed critics and altered professors  
Flimsily propoganding the angloenglish conventional;  
Poets, male and feeble, eternally praising each other;  
Women who write dainty, decorous lyrics to love—  
Poor dears who've never known a passion;  
Adjective poets, polishing, prefacing, diagramming,  
Copying, classifying, annotating,  
Culting their sick criticism,  
Herding their pale classicism.  
Was life to be taken up listlessly by lumpish artisans,

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Hamstrung with trochees,  
And castrated with iambic pentameters!  
One side, finikins,  
Perfection does not lie that way,  
Stiflers of emotion, suppressors of self —  
It was as well; you never had a thing to tell.  
And I rode over you . . . a deep smile for your  
    inanity . . .  
People, people, people,  
I bury you here . . . tis your only monument:  
Small-talk women with eyes forever on the main  
    chance,  
Ex-preachers newly-converted to ways of liberality,  
Blackneck socialists and putty-faced bohemians pass-  
    ing proclamations over rotten red ink,  
Editors and critics who grew up with the soil, and are  
    still dirty,  
Rubberstamps of the counting-room,  
Pack-horses mired . . . prize students still menarchic,  
Academic asses that weep at a thought of their alma  
    maternity,  
Red-blooded He-men awkward about teawagons —  
Metropolitan as a magazine,  
Men who praise women as artists and think politics  
    a noble calling . . .  
Radical academists . . . professional women,  
Whole-souled democrats,  
Compilers of anthologies — the cataloguers of medi-  
    ocrity,  
Women who lecture on the Higher Mysticism,

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Women who lecture,  
Women,  
Little reviewers, new republicans,  
Juvenile publishers of menopausal school-teachers,  
Neverclever critics,  
Actresses who haunt the boards and memory with  
atrocious puppeting,  
Husbands, wives,  
Wives, husbands,  
Maids who have slipped by Spring's awakening,  
Young composers, violinists, pianists — earnest virtuosi in the continent convention,  
Indian poetasters, Hispanic hoofers — latest discharge from polyglot privies,  
Maggoty maidens co-relating the obvious in anaemic ochre,  
Best-cellar illiterati recreating literature,  
And pale-stale poets who deify vegetation, —  
An ever-ridiculous pageant of blustering inferiority . . .  
Mechanic, pedagogue, housewife and clerk,  
Write a jingle about them and see how they perk . . .  
Horribly married . . . marriage . . . the word sickens.  
Upon it is based their drama, literature and song —  
And so tedium . . .  
Crowds, crowds, where is the thrill?  
As poignant as a time-table or a bill-of-fare . . .  
There is a city:  
They call it New York, and often say with grotesque pride that it is the biggest thing of its kind.

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It is . . . I wont dispute —  
The thing is ugliness;  
There in that rotpot of the world  
All the loutish ragtag of the republics  
Have congregated to consecrate the Philistine tradi-  
tion . . .  
The charming intensity of the common people,  
Another sickly shimmy of the democratic creed, —  
This Sue or Sadie married, this Jake or John in  
trade —  
There is their literature;  
Primeval primprudes yelping at the erotic —  
There is their criticism.  
Bathetic socialists forever at their silly code;  
I mourn for them, and so do their nails.  
Let's hope that in the millennium there'll be towels  
and soap for every Thomas and Richard . . .  
And Bohemia —  
There too, absolute evidence of the rule of the com-  
mercial propieties,  
Reflecting all the stalely-wicked virtues of the rustic  
provincial . . .  
Women artists!  
Well, there is a magazine, there is a book,  
There is a theatre, there is a gallery —  
I ask you, Sestra, are they art?  
Women novelists heaving huge obviosities wickedly,  
Women poets and painters chopping out lines as  
passionate as pastry.  
Married vestals who jingle chastely,

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And prolic critics who praise them.  
Women in art! God save the smirk!  
Bring them up to their indictment . . . the verdict  
stands —

Back to your knitting and your slops;  
I tire of you . . . . .  
Sob fiddle, mute cornet, bang banjo —  
Mill-town, swill-town,  
Academists crowding the gutter  
Billboard, trolley-car,  
Wops and cattle herding,  
Opera House, livery stable,  
Star-Spangled Britannia God Bless Our Home  
America I Love You

Jazz . . . . .

This was the land and the people, Caressa,  
This was the year, and the place  
Of our love.  
Drab days and futile hours,  
And would our love, then, prove as uneventful,  
Reading that night the everlasting question in your  
eyes . . .

Moonlight over the city,  
Snatches of syncopation vivace across the park,  
And passion sang the answer in your last caress.  
What of that essay on the ethics of the flesh —  
When you're older . . . put it away now . . .  
Live it . . .

Adorable, I do love you  
Even the way I sing love . . . what more?

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Let down your hair . . . let's live a poem  
Hold me that way, dear, your lips yield a triolet.  
Beauty through beauty to beauty again.  
What of your fame?  
Fame in my own way, the lone way,  
Expatriat ever from the blight of this land . . .  
Somewhere hand-in-hand . . . in the car . . .  
An open road . . . and lilacs for Spring . . .  
Down at the sweep of the valley, and the river's sil-  
ver-blue . . . we would make town by dusk . . .  
Let's have dinner in our room  
And watch the carmine evening loiter in.  
You're clever . . . Lilas was the one essence for to-  
night.  
Come closer, dear . . . this is our night for love —  
Tomorrow we will be in Enfield . . . . .  
Madness of May . . . not long ago . . .  
Wild roses sensuate across the dunes of Charlton —  
What was it that came, unbidden, to our love . . .  
A new thrill when I had sated them all . . .  
Starlight over the sands and the blue singing,  
singing . . .  
Was I not god . . . You granted it, my own . . .  
Kiss me again . . . nations babble their way to oblivion . . .  
This people has long outlived its epoch . . . . .  
Gladness of May . . . well, this much supreme . . .  
I was a god, and they could not stone me . . .  
A god, turning your body to flame  
And your warm, wan face to scarlet . . .

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Chill of your lips in passion . . . I drain them  
again . . . . .  
Sadness of May . . . another Spring . . .  
And ever the soft pathos that is you sorrowing each  
hour . . .  
Somewhere . . slumbering gardens . . subtly scented . .  
A waltz half-heard . . . and here  
The blare, the flare, cymbalic of this land . . .  
Again and again you came . . . and were gone . . .  
The soft intangible . . . the ever-sought . . . the  
never-found,  
Tempting me from disillusion to a new despair . . .  
Why did you always call me with music and color  
and magic of words . . .  
I remember, but I soon forget . . .  
Song for my singing, color for my painting, words  
that I played upon . . .  
Artist supreme . . . well, You granted it — my  
immortality . . .  
Quick fever of Spring, and in my heart a cynic hate  
Of every God-damned thing these pureswine ven-  
erate . . .  
Sometime a brass-band played, and you stood in the  
throng, marveling . . .  
Peanuts and popcorn . . . and your mother had never  
told you . . . . .  
Looking down upon the poppies of the park . . . a  
room cerise . . .  
Syncopation for possession  
And never a doctor for dénouement . . . . .



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Caresses pass, and now only memories —  
You that promised so much . . .  
And someday he will come . . . genius indeed . . .  
Eternally lingering between the lure and the laze . . .  
And what the hell has phantasy to do with poetry  
When art is ever self expression . . .  
And hours pass, and days pass, and months, and years . . .  
Give me your lips again . . . there was the song . . .  
What was the year,  
And whose were the hands softly, softly about me . . .  
Was it you, Senestra?  
There had been a time, you remember . . .  
Apartment stairs and lilacs . . .  
Eager idealists in a world of grooven fools . . .  
Pathos for the conflict . . .  
Well, it had all passed . . . another day . . . another  
way . . .  
Triumph . . . . .









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