

Classic Poetry Series

Ezra Pound

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

A Girl

The tree has entered my hands,
The sap has ascended my arms,
The tree has grown in my breast -
Downward,
The branches grow out of me, like arms.

Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them.
A child - so high - you are,
And all this is folly to the world.

Ezra Pound

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.

Ezra Pound

A Virginal

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
For my surrounding air hath a new lightness;
Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
And left me cloaked as with a gauze of aether;
As with sweet leaves; as with subtle clearness.
Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.
No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavour,
Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:
As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

Ezra Pound

Alba

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

Ezra Pound

An Immorality

Sing we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

Ezra Pound

Ancient Music

Winter is icummen in,
Lhude sing Goddamm.
Raineth drop and staineth slop,
And how the wind doth ramm!
Sing: Goddamm.

Skiddeth bus and sloppeth us,
An ague hath my ham.
Freezeth river, turneth liver,
Damn you, sing: Goddamm.

Goddamm, Goddamm, 'tis why I am, Goddamm,
So 'gainst the winter's balm.

Sing goddamm, damm, sing Goddamm.
Sing goddamm, sing goddamm, DAMM.

Ezra Pound

And the days are not full enough

And the days are not full enough
And the nights are not full enough
And life slips by like a field mouse
 Not shaking the grass

Ezra Pound

Ballad for Gloom

For God, our God is a gallant foe
That playeth behind the veil.

I have loved my God as a child at heart
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
I have loved my God as a maid to man—
But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe that plays behind the veil;
To meet your God as the night winds meet beyond Arcturus' pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
I have staked with my God for truth,
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed—
His dice be not of ruth.

For I am made as a naked blade,
But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
Shall win at the turn of the game.
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
But the ending is the same:
Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose
Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God is a gallant foe that playeth behind the veil.
Whom God deigns not to overthrow hath need of triple mail.

Ezra Pound

Ballad of the Goodly Fere

Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea.

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
"First let these go!" quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Or I'll see ye damned," says he.

Aye he sent us out through the crossed high spears
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
"Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town?" says he.

Oh we drank his "Hale" in the good red wine
When we last made company,
No capon priest was the Goodly Fere
But a man o' men was he.

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free,
That they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury.

They'll no' get him a' in a book I think
Though they write it cunningly;
No mouse of the scrolls was the Goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea.

If they think they ha' snared our Goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree.
"I'll go to the feast," quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Though I go to the gallows tree."

"Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and blind,
And wake the dead," says he,
"Ye shall see one thing to master all:
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree."

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men.
I have seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free,
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue
But never a cry cried he.

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee,

They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the grey o' the sea,

Like the sea that brooks no voyaging
With the winds unleashed and free,
Like the sea that he cowed at Genseret
Wi' twey words spoke' suddently.

A master of men was the Goodly Fere,
A mate of the wind and sea,
If they think they ha' slain our Goodly Fere
They are fools eternally.

I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb
Sin' they nailed him to the tree.

Ezra Pound

Before Sleep

The lateral vibrations caress me,
They leap and caress me,
They work pathetically in my favour,
They seek my financial good.

She of the spear stands present.
The gods of the underworld attend me, O Annubis,
These are they of thy company.
With a pathetic solicitude they attend me;
Undulant,
Their realm is the lateral courses.

Light!
I am up to follow thee, Pallas.
Up and out of their caresses.
You were gone up as a rocket,
Bending your passages from right to left and from left to right
In the flat projection of a spiral.
The gods of drugged sleep attend me,
Wishing me well;
I am up to follow thee, Pallas.

Ezra Pound

Cantico del Sole

The thought of what America would be like
If the Classics had a wide circulation
 Troubles my sleep,
The thought of what America,
The thought of what America, The thought of what America would be like
If the Classics had a wide circulation
 Troubles my sleep.
Nunc dimittis, now lettest thou thy servant,
Now lettest thou thy servant
 Depart in peace.
The thought of what America,
The thought of what America,
The thought of what America would be like
If the Classics had a wide circulation...
 Oh well!
 It troubles my sleep.

Ezra Pound

Canto 1

And then went down to the ship,
Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping, and winds from sternward
Bore us onward with bellying canvas,
Crice's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.
Then sat we amidships, wind jamming the tiller,
Thus with stretched sail, we went over sea till day's end.
Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean,
Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,
To the Kimmerian lands, and peopled cities
Covered with close-webbed mist, unpierced ever
With glitter of sun-rays
Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven
Swartest night stretched over wretched men there.
The ocean flowing backward, came we then to the place
Aforesaid by Circe.
Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin;
Poured we libations unto each the dead,
First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with white flour
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads;
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods,
A sheep to Tiresias only, black and a bell-sheep.
Dark blood flowed in the fosse,
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead, of brides
Of youths and of the old who had borne much;
Souls stained with recent tears, girls tender,
Men many, mauled with bronze lance heads,
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreary arms,
These many crowded about me; with shouting,
Pallor upon me, cried to my men for more beasts;
Slaughtered the herds, sheep slain of bronze;
Poured ointment, cried to the gods,
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine;
Unsheathed the narrow sword,
I sat to keep off the impetuous impotent dead,
Till I should hear Tiresias.
But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor,
Unburied, cast on the wide earth,
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe,
Unwept, unwrapped in the sepulchre, since toils urged other.
Pitiful spirit. And I cried in hurried speech:
"Elpenor, how art thou come to this dark coast?
"Cam'st thou afoot, outstripping seamen?"
And he in heavy speech:
"Ill fate and abundant wine. I slept in Crice's ingle.
"Going down the long ladder unguarded,
"I fell against the buttress,

"Shattered the nape-nerve, the soul sought Avernus.
"But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied,
"Heap up mine arms, be tomb by sea-bord, and inscribed:
"A man of no fortune, and with a name to come.
"And set my oar up, that I swung mid fellows."

And Anticlea came, whom I beat off, and then Tiresias Theban,
Holding his golden wand, knew me, and spoke first:
"A second time? why? man of ill star,
"Facing the sunless dead and this joyless region?
"Stand from the fosse, leave me my bloody bever
"For soothsay."

And I stepped back,
And he strong with the blood, said then: "Odysseus
"Shalt return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
"Lose all companions." Then Anticlea came.
Lie quiet Divus. I mean, that is Andreas Divus,
In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer.
And he sailed, by Sirens and thence outwards and away
And unto Crice.

Venerandam,
In the Cretan's phrase, with the golden crown, Aphrodite,
Cypri munimenta sortita est, mirthful, oricalchi, with golden
Girdle and brest bands, thou with dark eyelids
Bearing the golden bough of Argicidia. So that:

Ezra Pound

Canto 13

Kung walked
by the dynastic temple
and into the cedar grove,
and then out by the lower river,
And with him Khieu Tchi
and Tian the low speaking
And "we are unknown," said Kung,
"You will take up charioteering?"
"Then you will become known,
"Or perhaps I should take up charioterring, or archery?
"Or the practice of public speaking?"
And Tseu-lou said, "I would put the defences in order,"
And Khieu said, "If I were lord of a province
"I would put it in better order than this is."
And Tchi said, "I would prefer a small mountain temple,
"With order in the observances,
with a suitable performance of the ritual,"
And Tian said, with his hand on the strings of his lute
The low sounds continuing
after his hand left the strings,
And the sound went up like smoke, under the leaves,
And he looked after the sound:
"The old swimming hole,
"And the boys flopping off the planks,
"Or sitting in the underbrush playing mandolins."
And Kung smiled upon all of them equally.
And Tsheng-sie desired to know:
"Which had answered correctly?"
And Kung said, "They have all answered correctly,
"That is to say, each in his nature."
And Kung raised his cane against Yuan Jang,
Yuan Jang being his elder,
For Yuan Jang sat by the roadside pretending to
be receiving wisdom.
And Kung said
"You old fool, come out of it,
"Get up and do something useful."
And Kung said
"Respect a child's faculties
"From the moment it inhales the clear air,
"But a man of fifty who knows nothing
Is worthy of no respect."
And "When the prince has gathered about him
"All the savants and artists, his riches will be fully employed."
And Kung said, and wrote on the bamboo leaves:
If a man have not order within him
He can not spread order about him;
And if a man have not order within him
His family will not act with due order;
And if the prince have not order within him
He can not put order in his dominions.
And Kung gave the words "order"

and "brotherly deference"
And said nothing of the "life after death."
And he said

"Anyone can run to excesses,
"It is easy to shoot past the mark,
"It is hard to stand firm in the middle."

And they said: If a man commit murder
Should his father protect him, and hide him?
And Kung said:
He should hide him.

And Kung gave his daughter to Kong-Tchang
Although Kong-Tchang was in prison.
And he gave his niece to Nan-Young
although Nan-Young was out of office.
And Kung said "Wan ruled with moderation,
"In his day the State was well kept,
"And even I can remember
"A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
"I mean, for things they didn't know,
"But that time seems to be passing.
A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
But that time seems to be passing."
And Kung said, "Without character you will
"be unable to play on that instrument
"Or to execute the music fit for the Odes.
"The blossoms of the apricot
"blow from the east to the west,
"And I have tried to keep them from falling."

Ezra Pound

Canto 49

For the seven lakes, and by no man these verses:
Rain; empty river; a voyage,
Fire from frozen cloud, heavy rain in the twilight
Under the cabin roof was one lantern.
The reeds are heavy; bent;
and the bamboos speak as if weeping.

Autumn moon; hills rise about lakes
against sunset
Evening is like a curtain of cloud,
a blurr above ripples; and through it
sharp long spikes of the cinnamon,
a cold tune amid reeds.
Behind hill the monk's bell
borne on the wind.
Sail passed here in April; may return in October
Boat fades in silver; slowly;
Sun blaze alone on the river.

Where wine flag catches the sunset
Sparse chimneys smoke in the cross light

Comes then snow scur on the river
And a world is covered with jade
Small boat floats like a lanthorn,
The flowing water closts as with cold. And at San Yin
they are a people of leisure.

Wild geese swoop to the sand-bar,
Clouds gather about the hole of the window
Broad water; geese line out with the autumn
Rooks clatter over the fishermen's lanthorns,

A light moves on the north sky line;
where the young boys prod stones for shrimp.
In seventeen hundred came Tsing to these hill lakes.
A light moves on the South sky line.

State by creating riches shd. thereby get into debt?
Thsi is infamy; this is Geryon.
This canal goes still to TenShi
Though the old king built it for pleasure

K E I M E N R A N K E I
K I U M A N M A N K E I
J I T S U G E T S U K O K W A
T A N F U K U T A N K A I

Sun up; work
sundown; to rest
dig well and drink of the water
dig field; eat of the grain

Imperial power is? and to us what is it?

The fourth; the dimension of stillness.
And the power over wild beasts.

Ezra Pound

Canto I

And then went down to the ship,
Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
We set up mast and sail on tha swart ship,
Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping, so winds from sternward
Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,
Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.
Then sat we amidships, wind jamming the tiller,
Thus with stretched sail, we went over sea till day's end.
Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean,
Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,
To the Kimmerian lands, and peopled cities
Covered with close-webbed mist, unpierced ever
With glitter of sun-rays
Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven
Swartest night stretched over wretched men there.
The ocean flowing backward, came we then to the place
Aforesaid by Circe.
Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin;
Poured we libations unto each the dead,
First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with white flour.
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-head;
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods,
A sheep to Tiresias only, black and a bell-sheep.
Dark blood flowed in the fosse,
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead, of brides
Of youths and at the old who had borne much;
Souls stained with recent tears, girls tender,
Men many, mauled with bronze lance heads,
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreory arms,
These many crowded about me; with shouting,
Pallor upon me, cried to my men for more beasts;
Slaughtered the heards, sheep slain of bronze;
Poured ointment, cried to the gods,
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine;
Unsheathed the narrow sword,
I sat to keep off the impetuous impotent dead,
Till I should hear Tiresias.
But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor,
Unburied, cast on the wide earth,
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe,
Unwept, unwrapped in sepulchre, since toils urged other.
Pitiful spirit. And I cried in hurried speech:
"Elpenor, how art thou come to this dark coast?
Cam'st thou afoot, outstripping seamen?"

And he in heavy speech:
"Ill fate and abundant wine. I slept in Circe's ingle.
Going down the long ladder unguarded,

I fell against the buttress,
Shattered the nape-nerve, the soul sought Avernus.
But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied,
Heap up mine arms, be tomb by sea-bord, and inscribed:
A man of no fortune, and with a name to come.
And set my oar up, that I swung mid fellows."

And Anticlea came, whom I beat off, and then Tiresias Theban,
Holding his golden wand, knew me, and spoke first:
"A second time? why? man of ill star,
Facing the sunless dead and this joyless region?
Stand from the fosse, leave me my bloody bever
For soothsay."
And I stepped back,
And he stong with the blood, said then: "Odysseus
Shalt return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
Lose all companions." And then Anticlea came.
Lie quiet Divus. I mean, that is Andreas Divus,
In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer.
And he sailed, by Sirens and thence outward and away
And unto Circe.
Venerandam,
In the Creatan's phrase, with the golden crown, Aphrodite,
Cypri munimenta sortita est, mirthful, orichalchi, with golden
Girdles and breast bands, thou with dark eyelids
Bearing the golden bough of Argicida. So that:

Ezra Pound

Canto I: And Then Went Down to the Ship

And then went down to the ship,
Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping, and winds from sternward
Bore us onward with bellying canvas,
Crice's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.
Then sat we amidships, wind jamming the tiller,
Thus with stretched sail, we went over sea till day's end.
Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean,
Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,
To the Kimmerian lands, and peopled cities
Covered with close-webbed mist, unpierced ever
With glitter of sun-rays
Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven
Swartest night stretched over wretched men there.
The ocean flowing backward, came we then to the place
Aforesaid by Circe.
Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin;
Poured we libations unto each the dead,
First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with white flour
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads;
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods,
A sheep to Tiresias only, black and a bell-sheep.
Dark blood flowed in the fosse,
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead, of brides
Of youths and of the old who had borne much;
Souls stained with recent tears, girls tender,
Men many, mauled with bronze lance heads,
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreary arms,
These many crowded about me; with shouting,
Pallor upon me, cried to my men for more beasts;
Slaughtered the herds, sheep slain of bronze;
Poured ointment, cried to the gods,
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine;
Unsheathed the narrow sword,
I sat to keep off the impetuous impotent dead,
Till I should hear Tiresias.
But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor,
Unburied, cast on the wide earth,
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe,
Unwept, unwrapped in the sepulchre, since toils urged other.
Pitiful spirit. And I cried in hurried speech:
"Elpenor, how art thou come to this dark coast?
"Cam'st thou afoot, outstripping seamen?"
And he in heavy speech:
"Ill fate and abundant wine. I slept in Crice's ingle.
"Going down the long ladder unguarded,
"I fell against the buttress,

"Shattered the nape-nerve, the soul sought Avernus.
"But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied,
"Heap up mine arms, be tomb by sea-board, and inscribed:
"A man of no fortune, and with a name to come.
"And set my oar up, that I swung mid fellows."

And Anticlea came, whom I beat off, and then Tiresias Theban,
Holding his golden wand, knew me, and spoke first:
"A second time? why? man of ill star,
"Facing the sunless dead and this joyless region?
"Stand from the fosse, leave me my bloody bever
"For soothsay."
And I stepped back,
And he strong with the blood, said then: "Odysseus
"Shalt return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
"Lose all companions." Then Anticlea came.
Lie quiet Divus. I mean, that is Andreas Divus,
In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer.
And he sailed, by Sirens and thence outwards and away
And unto Crice.
Venerandam,
In the Cretan's phrase, with the golden crown, Aphrodite,
Cypri munimenta sortita est, mirthful, oricalchi, with golden
Girdle and brest bands, thou with dark eyelids
Bearing the golden bough of Argicidia. So that:

Ezra Pound

Canto XIII: Kung Walked

Kung walked
by the dynastic temple
and into the cedar grove,
and then out by the lower river,
And with him Khieu Tchi
and Tian the low speaking
And ``we are unknown," said Kung,
``You will take up charioteering?
``Then you will become known,
``Or perhaps I should take up charioterring, or archery?
``Or the practice of public speaking?"
And Tseu-lou said, ``I would put the defences in order,"
And Khieu said, ``If I were lord of a province
``I would put it in better order than this is."
And Tchi said, ``I would prefer a small mountain temple,
``With order in the observances,
with a suitable performance of the ritual,"
And Tian said, with his hand on the strings of his lute
The low sounds continuing
after his hand left the strings,
And the sound went up like smoke, under the leaves,
And he looked after the sound:
``The old swimming hole,
``And the boys flopping off the planks,
``Or sitting in the underbrush playing mandolins."
And Kung smiled upon all of them equally.
And Tsheng-sie desired to know:
``Which had answered correctly?"
And Kung said, ``They have all answered correctly,
``That is to say, each in his nature."
And Kung raised his cane against Yuan Jang,
Yuan Jang being his elder,
For Yuan Jang sat by the roadside pretending to
be receiving wisdom.
And Kung said
``You old fool, come out of it,
``Get up and do something useful."
And Kung said
``Respect a child's faculties
``From the moment it inhales the clear air,
``But a man of fifty who knows nothing
Is worthy of no respect."
And "When the prince has gathered about him
``All the savants and artists, his riches will be fully employed."
And Kung said, and wrote on the bamboo leaves:
If a man have not order within him
He can not spread order about him;
And if a man have not order within him
His family will not act with due order;
And if the prince have not order within him
He can not put order in his dominions.
And Kung gave the words ``order"

and ``brotherly deference"
And said nothing of the ``life after death."
And he said
``Anyone can run to excesses,
``It is easy to shoot past the mark,
``It is hard to stand firm in the middle."

And they said: If a man commit murder
Should his father protect him, and hide him?
And Kung said:
He should hide him.

And Kung gave his daughter to Kong-Tchang
Although Kong-Tchang was in prison.
And he gave his niece to Nan-Young
although Nan-Young was out of office.
And Kung said ``Wan ruled with moderation,
``In his day the State was well kept,
``And even I can remember
``A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
``I mean, for things they didn't know,
``But that time seems to be passing.
A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
But that time seems to be passing."
And Kung said, ``Without character you will
``be unable to play on that instrument
``Or to execute the music fit for the Odes.
``The blossoms of the apricot
``blow from the east to the west,
``And I have tried to keep them from falling."

Ezra Pound

Canto XLIX: For the Seven Lakes

For the seven lakes, and by no man these verses:
Rain; empty river; a voyage,
Fire from frozen cloud, heavy rain in the twilight
Under the cabin roof was one lantern.
The reeds are heavy; bent;
and the bamboos speak as if weeping.

Autumn moon; hills rise about lakes
against sunset
Evening is like a curtain of cloud,
a blurr above ripples; and through it
sharp long spikes of the cinnamon,
a cold tune amid reeds.
Behind hill the monk's bell
borne on the wind.
Sail passed here in April; may return in October
Boat fades in silver; slowly;
Sun blaze alone on the river.

Where wine flag catches the sunset
Sparse chimneys smoke in the cross light

Comes then snow scur on the river
And a world is covered with jade
Small boat floats like a lanthorn,
The flowing water closts as with cold. And at San Yin
they are a people of leisure.

Wild geese swoop to the sand-bar,
Clouds gather about the hole of the window
Broad water; geese line out with the autumn
Rooks clatter over the fishermen's lanthorns,

A light moves on the north sky line;
where the young boys prod stones for shrimp.
In seventeen hundred came Tsing to these hill lakes.
A light moves on the South sky line.

State by creating riches shd. thereby get into debt?
This is infamy; this is Geryon.
This canal goes still to TenShi
Though the old king built it for pleasure

K E I M E N R A N K E I
K I U M A N M A N K E I
J I T S U G E T S U K O K W A
T A N F U K U T A N K A I

Sun up; work
sundown; to rest
dig well and drink of the water
dig field; eat of the grain

Imperial power is? and to us what is it?

The fourth; the dimension of stillness.
And the power over wild beasts.

Ezra Pound

Cino

Italian Campagna 1309, the open road

Bah! I have sung women in three cities,
But it is all the same;
And I will sing of the sun.

Lips, words, and you snare them,
Dreams, words, and they are as jewels,
Strange spells of old deity,
Ravens, nights, allurements:
And they are not;
Having become the souls of song.

Eyes, dreams, lips, and the night goes.
Being upon the road once more,
They are not.
Forgetful in their towers of our tuning
Once for wind-runeing
They dream us-toward and
Sighing, say, ``Would Cino,
Passionate Cino, of the wrinkling eyes,
Gay Cino, of quick laughter,
Cino, of the dare, the jibe.
Frail Cino, strongest of his tribe
That tramp old ways beneath the sun-light,
Would Cino of the Luth were here!"

Once, twice a year---
Vaguely thus word they:

``Cino?" ``Oh, eh, Cino Polnesi
The singer is't you mean?"
``Ah yes, passed once our way,
A saucy fellow, but . . .
(Oh they are all one these vagabonds),
Peste! 'tis his own songs?
Or some other's that he sings?
But *you*, My Lord, how with your city?"

My you ``My Lord," God's pity!
And all I knew were out, My Lord, you
Were Lack-land Cino, e'en as I am,
O Sinistro.

I have sung women in three cities.
But it is all one.
I will sing of the sun.
. . . eh? . . . they mostly had grey eyes,
But it is all one, I will sing of the sun.

``'Pollo Phoibee, old tin pan, you
Glory to Zeus' aegis-day,

Shield o' steel-blue, th' heaven o'er us
Hath for boss thy lustre gay!

'Pollo Phoibee, to our way-fare
Make thy laugh our wander-ried;
Bid thy 'flugence bear away care.
Cloud and rain-tears pass they fleet!

Seeking e'er the new-laid rast-way
To the gardens of the sun . . .

* * *

I have sung women in three cities
But it is all one.
I will sing of the white birds
In the blue waters of heaven,
The clouds that are spray to its sea."

Ezra Pound

E.P. Ode Pour L'election De Son Sepulchre

For three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"
In the old sense. Wrong from the start--

No, hardly, but seeing he had been born
In a half savage country, out of date;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait;

Idmen gar toi panth, hos eni troie
Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events,"
He passed from men's memory in l'an trentuniesme
de son eage; the case presents
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.

II
The age demanded an image
Of its accelerated grimace,
Something for the modern stage
Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, certainly, the obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze;
Better mendacities
Than the classics in paraphrase!

The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
Made with no loss of time,
A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
Or the "sculpture" of rhyme.

III
The tea-rose tea-gown, etc.
Supplants the mousseline of Cos,
The pianola "replaces"
Sappho's barbitos.

Christ follows Dionysus,
Phallic and ambrosial
Made way for macerations;
Caliban casts out Ariel.

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,
disillusions as never told in the old days,
hysterias, trench confessions,
laughter out of dead bellies.

V

There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization,

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,
For a few thousand battered books.

Ezra Pound

Envoi

Go, dumb-born book,
Tell her that sang me once that song of Lawes:
Hadst thou but song
As thou hast subjects known,
Then were there cause in thee that should condone
Even my faults that heavy upon me lie
And build her glories their longevity.
Tell her that sheds
Such treasure in the air,
Recking naught else but that her graces give
Life to the moment,
I would bid them live
As roses might, in magic amber laid,
Red overwrought with orange and all made
One substance and one colour
Braving time.
Tell her that goes
With song upon her lips
But sings not out the song, nor knows
The maker of it, some other mouth,
May be as fair as hers,
Might, in new ages, gain her worshippers,
When our two dusts with Waller's shall be laid,
Siftings on siftings in oblivion,
Till change hath broken down
All things save Beauty alone.

Ezra Pound

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 maitre-de-cafe.

Ezra Pound

Ezra on the Strike

Wal, Thanksgivin' do be comin' round.
With the price of turkeys on the bound,
And coal, by gum! Thet were just found,
Is surely gettin' cheaper.

The winds will soon begin to howl,
And winter, in its yearly growl,
Across the medders begin to prowl,
And Jack Frost gettin' deeper.

By shucks! It seems to me,
That you I orter be
Thankful, that our Ted could see
A way to operate it.

I sez to Mandy, sure, sez I,
I'll bet thet air patch o' rye
Thet he'll squash 'em by-and-by,
And he did, by cricket!

No use talkin', he's the man -
One of the best thet ever ran,
Fer didn't I turn Republican
One o' the fust?

I 'lowed as how he'd beat the rest,
But old Si Perkins, he hemmed and guessed,
And sed as how it wuzn't best
To meddle with the trust.

Ezra Pound

Fan-Piece, For Her Imperial Lord

O fan of white silk,
clear as frost on the grass-blade,

You also are laid aside.

Ezra Pound

Francesca

You came in out of the night
And there were flowers in your hand,
Now you will come out of a confusion of people,
Out of a turmoil of speech about you.

I who have seen you amid the primal things
Was angry when they spoke your name
IN ordinary places.
I would that the cool waves might flow over my mind,
And that the world should dry as a dead leaf,
Or as a dandelion see-pod and be swept away,
So that I might find you again,
Alone.

Ezra Pound

from "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly"

For three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"
In the old scene. Wrong from the start--

No, hardly, but seeing he had been born
In a half-savage country, out of date;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait;

[idmen gar toi pant, hos eni Troiei]
Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events,"
He passed from men's memory in l'an trentuniesme
De son eage; the case presents
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.

Ezra Pound

Further Instructions

Come, my songs, let us express our baser passions.
Let us express our envy for 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 the streets, You loiter at the corners and bus-stops,
You do next to nothing at all.

You do not even express our inner nobilitys,
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.

Ezra Pound

Grace Before Song

Lord God of heaven that with mercy dight
Th'alternate prayer wheel of the night and light
Eternal hath to thee, and in whose sight
Our days as rain drops in the sea surge fall,

As bright white drops upon a leaden sea
Grant so my songs to this grey folk may be:

As drops that dream and gleam and falling catch the sun
Evan'scent mirrors every opal one
Of such his splendor as their compass is,
So, bold My Songs, seek ye such death as this.

Ezra Pound

Historion

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 athrough 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.

Ezra Pound

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 athrough 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.

Ezra Pound

Hugh Selwyn Mauberly (Part I)

"Vocat aestus in umbram"
Nemesianus Es. IV.

E. P. Ode pour l'élection de son sépulchre

For three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"
In the old sense. Wrong from the start --

No, hardly, but, seeing he had been born
In a half savage country, out of date;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait:

"Idmen gar toi panth, os eni Troie
Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events",
He passed from men's memory in l'an trentiesme
De son eage; the case presents
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.

II.

The age demanded an image
Of its accelerated grimace,
Something for the modern stage,
Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze;
Better mendacities
Than the classics in paraphrase!

The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
Made with no loss of time,
A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
Or the "sculpture" of rhyme.

III.

The tea-rose, tea-gown, etc.
Supplants the mousseline of Cos,
The pianola "replaces"

Sappho's barbitos.

Christ follows Dionysus,
Phallic and ambrosial
Made way for macerations;
Caliban casts out Ariel.

All things are a flowing,
Sage Heracleitus says;
But a tawdry cheapness
Shall reign throughout our days.

Even the Christian beauty
Defects -- after Samothrace;
We see to kalon
Decreed in the market place.

Faun's flesh is not to us,
Nor the saint's vision.
We have the press for wafer;
Franchise for circumcision.

All men, in law, are equals.
Free of Peisistratus,
We choose a knave or an eunuch
To rule over us.

A bright Apollo,

tin andra, tin eroa, tina theon,
What god, man, or hero
Shall I place a tin wreath upon?

IV.

These fought, in any case,
and some believing, pro domo, in any case ..

Some quick to arm,
some for adventure,
some from fear of weakness,
some from fear of censure,
some for love of slaughter, in imagination,
learning later ...

some in fear, learning love of slaughter;
Died some pro patria, non dulce non et decor" ..

walked eye-deep in hell
believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving
came home, home to a lie,
home to many deceits,

home to old lies and new infamy;

usury age-old and age-thick
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.
Young blood and high blood,
Fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,
disillusions as never told in the old days,
hysterias, trench confessions,
laughter out of dead bellies.

V.

There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization.

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,
For a few thousand battered books.

Yeux Glauques

Gladstone was still respected,
When John Ruskin produced
"Kings Treasuries"; Swinburne
And Rossetti still abused.

Fœtid Buchanan lifted up his voice
When that faun's head of hers
Became a pastime for
Painters and adulterers.

The Burne-Jones cartons
Have preserved her eyes;
Still, at the Tate, they teach
Cophetua to rhapsodize;

Thin like brook-water,
With a vacant gaze.
The English Rubaiyat was still-born
In those days.

The thin, clear gaze, the same
Still darts out faun-like from the half-ruin'd face,
Questing and passive
"Ah, poor Jenny's case" ...

Bewildered that a world
Shows no surprise
At her last maquero's
Adulteries.

"Siena Mi Fe', Disfecemi Maremma"

Among the pickled foetuses and bottled bones,
Engaged in perfecting the catalogue,
I found the last scion of the
Senatorial families of Strasbourg, Monsieur Verog.

For two hours he talked of Gallifet;
Of Dowson; of the Rhymers' Club;
Told me how Johnson (Lionel) died
By falling from a high stool in a pub ...

But showed no trace of alcohol
At the autopsy, privately performed --
Tissue preserved -- the pure mind
Arose toward Newman as the whiskey warmed.

Dowson found harlots cheaper than hotels;
Headlam for uplift; Image impartially imbued
With raptures for Bacchus, Terpsichore and the Church.
So spoke the author of "The Dorian Mood",

M. Verog, out of step with the decade,
Detached from his contemporaries,
Neglected by the young,
Because of these reveries.

Brennbaum.

The sky-like limpid eyes,
The circular infant's face,
The stiffness from spats to collar
Never relaxing into grace;

The heavy memories of Horeb, Sinai and the forty years,
Showed only when the daylight fell
Level across the face
Of Brennbaum "The Impeccable".

Mr. Nixon

In the cream gilded cabin of his steam yacht

Mr. Nixon advised me kindly, to advance with fewer
Dangers of delay. "Consider
Carefully the reviewer.

"I was as poor as you are;
"When I began I got, of course,
"Advance on royalties, fifty at first", said Mr. Nixon,
"Follow me, and take a column,
"Even if you have to work free.

"Butter reviewers. From fifty to three hundred
"I rose in eighteen months;
"The hardest nut I had to crack
"Was Dr. Dundas.

"I never mentioned a man but with the view
"Of selling my own works.
"The tip's a good one, as for literature
"It gives no man a sinecure."

And no one knows, at sight a masterpiece.
And give up verse, my boy,
There's nothing in it."

* * *

Likewise a friend of Bloughram's once advised me:
Don't kick against the pricks,
Accept opinion. The "Nineties" tried your game
And died, there's nothing in it.

X.

Beneath the sagging roof
The stylist has taken shelter,
Unpaid, uncelebrated,
At last from the world's welter

Nature receives him,
With a placid and uneducated mistress
He exercises his talents
And the soil meets his distress.

The haven from sophistications and contentions
Leaks through its thatch;
He offers succulent cooking;
The door has a creaking latch.

XI.

"Conservatrix of Milésien"
Habits of mind and feeling,

Possibly. But in Ealing
With the most bank-clerkly of Englishmen?

No, "Milésian" is an exaggeration.
No instinct has survived in her
Older than those her grandmother
Told her would fit her station.

XII.

"Daphne with her thighs in bark
Stretches toward me her leafy hands", --
Subjectively. In the stuffed-satin drawing-room
I await The Lady Valentine's commands,

Knowing my coat has never been
Of precisely the fashion
To stimulate, in her,
A durable passion;

Doubtful, somewhat, of the value
Of well-gowned approbation
Of literary effort,
But never of The Lady Valentine's vocation:

Poetry, her border of ideas,
The edge, uncertain, but a means of blending
With other strata
Where the lower and higher have ending;

A hook to catch the Lady Jane's attention,
A modulation toward the theatre,
Also, in the case of revolution,
A possible friend and comforter.

* * *

Conduct, on the other hand, the soul
"Which the highest cultures have nourished"
To Fleet St. where
Dr. Johnson flourished;

Beside this thoroughfare
The sale of half-hose has
Long since superseded the cultivation
Of Pierian roses.

Ezra Pound

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
petals on a wet, black bough.

Ezra Pound

In Tempore Senectutis

When I am old
I will not have you look apart
From me, into the cold,
Friend of my heart,
Nor be sad in your remembrance
Of the careless, mad-heart semblance
That the wind hath blown away
When I am old.

When I am old
And the white hot wonder-fire
Unto the world seem cold,
My soul's desire
Know you then that all life's shower,
The rain of the years, that hour
Shall make blow for us one flower,
Including all, when we are old.

When I am old
If you remember
Any love save what is then
Hearth light unto life's December
Be your joy of past sweet chalices
To know then naught but this
"How many wonders are less sweet
Than love I bear to thee
When I am old."

Ezra Pound

In the Old Age of the Soul

I do not choose to dream; there cometh on me
Some strange old lust for deeds.
As to the nerveless hand of some old warrior
The sword-hilt or the war-worn wonted helmet
Brings momentary life and long-fled cunning,
So to my soul grown old -
Grown old with many a jousting, many a foray,
Grown old with many a hither-coming and hence-going -
Till now they send him dreams and no more deed;
So doth he flame again with might for action,
Forgetful of the council of elders,
Forgetful that who rules doth no more battle,
Forgetful that such might no more cleaves to him
So doth he flame again toward valiant doing.

Ezra Pound

Invern

Earth's winter cometh
And I being part of all
And sith the spirit of all moveth in me
I must needs bear earth's winter
Drawn cold and grey with hours
And joying in a momentary sun,
Lo I am withered with waiting till my spring cometh!
Or crouch covetous of warmth
O'er scant-logged ingle blaze,
Must take cramped joy in tomed Longinus
That, read I him first time
The woods agleam with summer
Or mid desirous winds of spring,
Had set me singing spheres
Or made heart to wander forth among warm roses
Or curl in grass next neath a kindly moon.

Ezra Pound

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.

Ezra Pound

Ité

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 you wounds from it gladly.

Ezra Pound

La Regina Avrillouse

Lady of rich allure,
Queen of the spring's embrace,
Your arms are long like boughs of ash,
Mid laugh-broken streams, spirit of rain unsure,
Breath of the poppy flower,
All the wood thy bower
And the hills thy dwelling-place.

This will I no more dream;
Warm is thy arm's allure,
Warm is the gust of breath
That ere thy lips meet mine
Kisseth my cheek and saith:
"This is the joy of earth,
Here is the wine of mirth
Drain ye one goblet sure,

Take ye the honey cup
The honied song raise up,
Drink of the spring's allure,
April and dew and rain;
Brown of the earth sing sure,
Cheeks and lips and hair
And soft breath that kisseth where
Thy lips have come not yet to drink."

Moss and the mold of earth,
These be thy couch of mirth,
Long arms thy boughs of shade
April-alluring, as the blade
Of grass doth catch the dew
And make it crown to hold the sun.
Banner be you
Above my head,
Glory to all wold display'd,
April-alluring, glory-bold.

Ezra Pound

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,
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. [Li Po?]

Ezra Pound

L'Art

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

Ezra Pound

Masks

These tales of old disguisings, are they not
Strange myths of souls that found themselves among
Unwonted folk that spake an hostile tongue,
Some soul from all the rest who'd not forgot
The star-span acres of a former lot
Where boundless mid the clouds his course he swung,
Or carnate with his elder brothers sung
Ere ballad-makers lisped of Camelot?

Old singers half-forgetful of their tunes,
Old painters color-blind come back once more,
Old poets skill-less in the wind-heart runes,
Old wizards lacking in their wonder-lore:

All they that with strange sadness in their eyes
Ponder in silence o'er earth's queynt devyse?

Ezra Pound

Medallion

Luini in porcelain!
The grand piano
Utters a profane
Protest with her clear soprano.

The sleek head emerges
From the gold-yellow frock
As Anadyomene in the opening
Pages of Reinach.

Honey-red, closing the face-oval,
A basket-work of braids which seem as if they were
Spun in King Minos' hall
From metal, or intractable amber;

The face-oval beneath the glaze,
Bright in its suave bounding-line, as,
Beneath half-watt rays,
The eyes turn topaz.

Ezra Pound

Meditatio

When I carefully consider the curious habits of dogs
I am compelled to conclude
That man is the superior animal.

When I consider the curious habits of man
I confess, my friend, I am puzzled.

Ezra Pound

Nicotine

Hymn to the Dope

Goddess of the murmuring courts,
Nicotine, my Nicotine,
Houri of the mystic sports,
trailing-robed in gabardine,
Gliding where the breath hath glided,
Hidden sylph of filmy veils,
Truth behind the dream is veiled
E'en as thou art, smiling ever, ever gliding,
Wraith of wraiths, dim lights dividing
Purple, grey, and shadow green
Goddess, Dream-grace, Nicotine.

Goddess of the shadow's lights,
Nicotine, my Nicotine,
Some would set old Earth to rights,
Thou I none such ween.
Veils of shade our dream dividing,
Houris dancing, intergliding,
Wraith of wraiths and dream of faces,
Silent guardian of the old unhallowed places,
Utter symbol of all old sweet druidings,
Mem'ry of witched wold and green,
Nicotine, my Nicotine:

Neath the shadows of thy weaving
Dreams that need no undeceiving,
Loves that longer hold me not,
Dreams I dream not any more,
Fragrance of old sweet forgotten places,
Smiles of dream-lit, flit-by faces
All as perfume Arab-sweet
Deck the high road to thy feet

As were Godiva's coming fated
And all the April's blush belated
Were lain before her, carpeting
The stones of Coventry with spring,
So thou my mist-enwreathéd queen,
Nicotine, white Nicotine,
Riding engloried in they hair
Mak'st by-road of our dreams
Thy thorough-fare.

Ezra Pound

Notes for Canto CXX

I have tried to write Paradise

Do not move
Let the wind speak
that is paradise.

Let the Gods forgive what I
have made
Let those I love try to forgive
what I have made.

Ezra Pound

Portrait d'une Femme

Your mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,
London has swept about you this score years
And bright ships left you this or that in fee:
Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed wares of price.
Great minds have sought you -- lacking someone else.
You have been second always. Tragical?
No. You preferred it to the usual thing:
One dull man, dulling and uxorious,
One average mind -- with one thought less, each year.
Oh, you are patient, I have seen you sit
Hours, where something might have floated up.
And now you pay one. Yes, you richly pay.
You are a person of some interest, one comes to you
And takes strange gain away:
Trophies fished up; some curious suggestion;
Fact that leads nowhere; and a tale for two,
Pregnant with mandrakes, or with something else
That might prove useful and yet never proves,
That never fits a corner or shows use,
Or finds its hour upon the loom of days:
The tarnished, gaudy, wonderful old work;
Idols and ambergris and rare inlays,
These are your riches, your great store; and yet
For all this sea-hoard of deciduous things,
Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff:
In the slow float of differing light and deep,
No! there is nothing! In the whole and all,
Nothing that's quite your own.
Yet this is you.

Ezra Pound

Quies

This is another of our ancient loves.
Pass and be silent, Rullus, for the day
Hath lacked a something since this lady passed;
Hath lacked a something. 'Twas but marginal.

Ezra Pound

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.

Ezra Pound

Sestina: Altaforte

Loquitur: En Bertrans de Born.
Dante Alighieri put this man in hell for that he was a
stirrer-up of strife.
Eccovi!
Judge ye!
Have I dug him up again?
The scene in at his castle, Altaforte. "Papiols" is his jongleur.
"The Leopard," the device of Richard (Cœur de Lion).

I

Damn it all! all this our South stinks peace.
You whoreson dog, Papiols, come! Let's to music!
I have no life save when the swords clash.
But ah! when I see the standards gold, vair, purple, opposing
And the broad fields beneath them turn crimson,
Then howl I my heart nigh mad with rejoicing.

II

In hot summer have I great rejoicing
When the tempests kill the earth's foul peace,
And the lightnings from black heav'n flash crimson,
And the fierce thunders roar me their music
And the winds shriek through the clouds mad, opposing,
And through all the riven skies God's swords clash.

III

Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
And the shrill neighs of destriers in battle rejoicing,
Spiked breast to spiked breast opposing!
Better one hour's stour than a year's peace
With fat boards, bawds, wine and frail music!
Bah! there's no wine like the blood's crimson!

IV

And I love to see the sun rise blood-crimson.
And I watch his spears through the dark clash
And it fills all my heart with rejoicing
And pries wide my mouth with fast music
When I see him so scorn and defy peace,
His lone might 'gainst all darkness opposing.

V

The man who fears war and squats opposing
My words for stour, hath no blood of crimson
But is fit only to rot in womanish peace
Far from where worth's won and the swords clash
For the death of such sluts I go rejoicing;

Yea, I fill all the air with my music.

VI

Papiols, Papiols, to the music!
There's no sound like to swords swords opposing,
No cry like the battle's rejoicing
When our elbows and swords drip the crimson
And our charges 'gainst "The Leopard's" rush clash.
May God damn for ever all who cry "Peace!"

VII

And let the music of the swords make them crimson!
Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
Hell blot black for always the thought "Peace!"

Ezra Pound

Silet

When I behold how black, immortal ink
Drips from my deathless pen - ah, well-away!
Why should we stop at all for what I think?
There is enough in what I chance to say.

It is enough that we once came together;
What is the use of setting it to rime?
When it is autumn do we get spring weather,
Or gather may of harsh northwindish time?

It is enough that we once came together;
What if the wind have turned against the rain?
It is enough that we once came together;
Time has seen this, and will not turn again;

And who are we, who know that last intent,
To plague to-morrow with a testament!

Ezra Pound

Song

Winter is icummen in,
Lhude sing Goddamm,
Raineth drop and staineth slop,
and how the wind doth ramm,
Sing: Goddamm.
Skiddeth bus and sloppeth us,
An ague hath my ham.
Freezeth river, turneth liver,
Damn you, sing: Goddamm.
Goddamm, Goddamm, 'tis why I am, Goddamm,
So 'gainst the winter's balm.
Sing goddamm, damm, sing Goddamm,

Sing goddamm, sing goddamm, DAMM.

Ezra Pound

Song in the Manner of Housman

O woe, woe,
People are born and die,
We also shall be dead pretty soon
Therefore let us act as if we were
dead already.

The bird sits on the hawthorn tree
But he dies also, presently.
Some lads get hung, and some get shot.
Woeful is this human lot.
<i>Woe! woe, etcetera</i>

London is a woeful place,
Shropshire is much pleasanter.
Then let us smile a little space
Upon fond nature's morbid grace.
<i>Oh, Woe, woe, woe, etcetera . . . </i>

Ezra Pound

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.
Horses, his horses even, are tired. They were strong.
We have no rest, three battles a month.
By heavn, 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?

<i>By Bunno, reputedly 1100 B. C.</i>

Ezra Pound

Statement of Being

I am a grave poetic hen
That lays poetic eggs
And to enhance my temperament
A little quiet begs.

We make the yolk philosophy,
True beauty the albumen.
And then gum on a shell of form
To make the screed sound human.

Ezra Pound

Sub Mare

It is, and is not, I am sane enough,
Since you have come this place has hovered round me,
This fabrication built of autumn roses,
Then there's a goldish colour, different.

And one gropes in these things as delicate
Algæ reach up and out, beneath
Pale slow green surgings of the underwave,
'Mid these things older than the names they have,
These things that are familiars of the god.

Ezra Pound

Taking Leave of a Friend

Blue mountains to the north of the walls,
White river winding about them;
Here we must make separation
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 others
as we are departing.

Ezra Pound

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 antennae
Is both stimulating and delightful.

Ezra Pound

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-satisfactory lady.

Ezra Pound

The Encounter

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

Ezra Pound

The Fault of It

Some may have blamed us that we cease to speak
Of things we spoke of in our verses early,
Saying: a lovely voice is such as such;
Saying: that lady's eyes were sad last week,
Wherein the world's whole joy is born and dies;
Saying: she hath this way or that, this much
Of grace, this way or that, this much
Of grace, this little misericorde;
Ask us no further word;
If we were proud, then proud to be so wise
Ask us no more of all the things ye heard;
We may not speak of them, they touch us nearly.

Ezra Pound

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
 Tof a sort of emotional anaemia.

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 some one to speak to her,
And is almost afraid that I
 Twill commit that indiscretion.

Ezra Pound

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.

Ezra Pound

The Garrett

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.

Ezra Pound

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.

Ezra Pound

The Lake Isle

O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,
Give me in due time, I beseech you, a little tobacco-shop,
With the little bright boxes
piled up neatly upon the shelves
And the loose fragment cavendish
and the shag,
And the bright Virginia
loose under the bright glass cases,
And a pair of scales
not too greasy,
And the votailles dropping in for a word or two in passing,
For a flip word, and to tidy their hair a bit.

O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,
Lend me a little tobacco-shop,
or install me in any profession
Save this damn'd profession of writing,
where one needs one's brains all the time.

Ezra Pound

The Logical Conclusion

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Ezra Pound

The Needle

Come, or the stellar tide will slip away.
Eastward avoid the hour of its decline,
Now! for the needle trembles in my soul!

Here have we had the vantage, the good hour.
Here we have had our day, your day and mine.
Come now, before this power
That bears us up, shall turn against the pole.
Mock not the flood of stars, the thing's to be.
O Love, come now, this land turns evil slowly.
The waves bore in, soon will they bear away.

The treasure is ours, make we fast land with it.
Move we and take the tide, with its next favour,
Abide
Under some neutral force
Until this course turneth aside.

Ezra Pound

The Plunge

I would bathe myself in strangeness:
These comforts heaped upon me, smother me!
I burn, I scald so for the new,
New friends, new faces,
Places!
Oh to be out of this,
This that is all I wanted
- save the new.

And you,
Love, you the much, the more desired!
Do I not loathe all walls, streets, stones,
All mire, mist, all fog,
All ways of traffic?
You, I would have flow over me like water,
Oh, but far out of this!
Grass, and low fields, and hills,
And sun,
Oh, sun enough!
Out, and alone, among some
Alien people!

Ezra Pound

The Return

See, they return; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
Wavering!

See, they return, one by one,
With fear, as half-awakened;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half turn back;
These were the "Wing'd-with-Awe,"
Inviolable.

Gods of the Wingèd shoe!
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air!

Haie! Haie!
These were the swift to harry;
These the keen-scented;
These were the souls of blood.

Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-men!

Ezra Pound

The River-Merchant's Wife

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 lookout?

At sixteen you departed,
You went into far Ku-to-en, by the river of swirling eddies,
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-fo-Sa.

Ezra Pound

The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter

After Li Po

While my hair was still cut straight
 across my forehead
I played at 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 lookout?

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

Translated by Ezra Pound

Anonymous submission.

Ezra Pound

The Seafarer

(From the early Anglo-Saxon text)

May I for my own self song's truth reckon,
Journey's jargon, how I in harsh days
Hardship endured oft.
Bitter breast-cares have I abided,
Known on my keel many a care's hold,
And dire sea-surge, and there I oft spent
Narrow nightwatch nigh the ship's head
While she tossed close to cliffs. Coldly afflicted,
My feet were by frost benumbed.
Chill its chains are; chafing sighs
Hew my heart round and hunger begot
Mere-weary mood. Lest man know not
That he on dry land loveliest liveth,
List how I, care-wretched, on ice-cold sea,
Weathered the winter, wretched outcast
Deprived of my kinsmen;
Hung with hard ice-flakes, where hail-scur flew,
There I heard naught save the harsh sea
And ice-cold wave, at whiles the swan cries,
Did for my games the gannet's clamour,
Sea-fowls, loudness was for me laughter,
The mew's' singing all my mead-drink.
Storms, on the stone-cliffs beaten, fell on the stern
In icy feathers; full oft the eagle screamed
With spray on his pinion.
Not any protector
May make merry man faring needy.
This he little believes, who aye in winsome life
Abides 'mid burghers some heavy business,
Wealthy and wine-flushed, how I weary oft
Must bide above brine.
Neareth nightshade, snoweth from north,
Frost froze the land, hail fell on earth then
Corn of the coldest. Nathless there knocketh now
The heart's thought that I on high streams
The salt-wavy tumult traverse alone.
Moaneth alway my mind's lust
That I fare forth, that I afar hence
Seek out a foreign fastness.
For this there's no mood-lofty man over earth's midst,
Not though he be given his good, but will have in his youth greed;
Nor his deed to the daring, nor his king to the faithful
But shall have his sorrow for sea-fare
Whatever his lord will.
He hath not heart for harping, nor in ring-having
Nor winsomeness to wife, nor world's delight
Nor any whit else save the wave's slash,
Yet longing comes upon him to fare forth on the water.
Bosque taketh blossom, cometh beauty of berries,
Fields to fairness, land fares brisker,

All this admonisheth man eager of mood,
 The heart turns to travel so that he then thinks
 On flood-ways to be far departing.
 Cuckoo calleth with gloomy crying,
 He singeth summerward, bodeth sorrow,
 The bitter heart's blood. Burgher knows not --
 He the prosperous man -- what some perform
 Where wandering them widest draweth.
 So that but now my heart burst from my breast-lock,
 My mood 'mid the mere-flood,
 Over the whale's acre, would wander wide.
 On earth's shelter cometh oft to me,
 Eager and ready, the crying lone-flyer,
 Whets for the whale-path the heart irresistibly,
 O'er tracks of ocean; seeing that anyhow
 My lord deems to me this dead life
 On loan and on land, I believe not
 That any earth-weal eternal standeth
 Save there be somewhat calamitous
 That, ere a man's tide go, turn it to twain.
 Disease or oldness or sword-hate
 Beats out the breath from doom-gripped body.
 And for this, every earl whatever, for those speaking after --
 Laud of the living, boasteth some last word,
 That he will work ere he pass onward,
 Frame on the fair earth 'gainst foes his malice,
 Daring ado, ...
 So that all men shall honour him after
 And his laud beyond them remain 'mid the English,
 Aye, for ever, a lasting life's-blast,
 Delight mid the doughty.
 Days little durable,
 And all arrogance of earthen riches,
 There come now no kings nor Cæsars
 Nor gold-giving lords like those gone.
 Howe'er in mirth most magnified,
 Whoe'er lived in life most lordliest,
 Drear all this excellence, delights undurable!
 Waneth the watch, but the world holdeth.
 Tomb hideth trouble. The blade is layed low.
 Earthly glory ageth and seareth.
 No man at all going the earth's gait,
 But age fares against him, his face paleth,
 Grey-haired he groaneth, knows gone companions,
 Lordly men are to earth o'ergiven,
 Nor may he then the flesh-cover, whose life ceaseth,
 Nor eat the sweet nor feel the sorry,
 Nor stir hand nor think in mid heart,
 And though he strew the grave with gold,
 His born brothers, their buried bodies
 Be an unlikely treasure hoard.

Ezra Pound

The Seeing Eye

The small dogs look at the big dogs;
They observe unwieldy dimensions
And curious imperfections of odor.
Here is the formal male group:
The young men look upon their seniors,
They consider the elderly mind
And observe its inexplicable correlations.

Said Tsin-Tsu:
It is only in small dogs and the young
That we find minute observation

Ezra Pound

The Summons

I can not bow to woo thee
With honey words and flower kisses
And the dew of sweet half-truths
Fallen on the grass of old quaint love-tales
Of broidered days foredone.
Nor in the murmurous twilight
May I sit below thee,
Worshiping in whispers
Tremulous as far-heard bells.
All these things have I known once
And passed
In that gay youth I had but yester-year.
And that is gone
As the shadow of wind.
Nay, I can not woo thee thus;
But as I am ever swept upward
To the centre of all truth
So must I bear thee with me
Rapt into this great involving flame,
Calling ever from the midst thereof,
"Follow! Follow!"
And in the glory of our meeting
Shall the power be reborn.
And together in the midst of this power
Must we, each outstriving each,
Cry eternally:
"I come, go thou yet further."
And again, "Follow,"
For we may not tarry.

Ezra Pound

The Tree

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
Knowing the truth of things unseen before;
Of Daphne and the laurel bow
And that god-feasting couple old
that grew elm-oak amid the wold.
'Twas not until the gods had been
Kindly entreated, and been brought within
Unto the hearth of their heart's home
That they might do this wonder thing;
Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
And many a new thing understood
That was rank folly to my head before.

Ezra Pound

These Fought in Any Case

These fought in any case,
and some believing
pro domo, in any case

Died some, pro patria,
walked eye-deep in hell
believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving
came home, home to a lie,
home to many deceits,
home to old lies and new infamy;
usury age-old and age-thick
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.
Young blood and high blood,
fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,
disillusions as never told in the old days,
hysterias, trench confessions,
laughter out of dead bellies.

Ezra Pound

Ts'ai Chi'h

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

Ezra Pound

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.
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 last, found them?
Twice they promised to come.

"Between the night and the morning?"
Beauty would drink of my mind.
Youth would awhile forget
my youth is gone from me.

(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'.")

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."

Ezra Pound

Villonaud for This Yule

Towards the Noel that morte saison
<i>(Christ make the shepherds' homage dear!)</i>
Then when the grey wolves everychone
Drink of the winds their chill small-beer
And lap o' the snows food's gueredon
Then makyth my heart his yule-tide cheer
<i>(Skoal! with the dregs if the clear be gone!)</i>
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Ask ye what ghost I dream upon?
<i>(What of the magians' scented gear?)</i>
The ghosts of dead loves everyone
That make the stark winds reek with fear
Lest love return with the foison sun
And slay the memories that me cheer
<i>(Such as I drink to mine fashion)</i>
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Where are the joys my heart had won?
<i>(Saturn and Mars to Zeus drawn near!)</i>
Where are athe lips mine lay upon,
Aye! where are the glances feat and clear
That bade my heart his valor don?

I skoal to the eyes as grey-blown meer
<i>(Who knows whose was that paragon?)</i>
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Prince: ask me not what I have done
Nor what God hath that can me cheer
But ye ask first where the winds are gone
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Ezra Pound