

The Plunge

by Ezra Pound

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!

The Garret

by Ezra Pound

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.

Fan-Piece, For Her Imperial Lord
by Ezra Pound

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

Song

by Ezra Pound

Love thou thy dream
All base love scorning,
Love thou the wind
And here take warning
That dreams alone can truly be,
For 'tis in dream I come to thee.

The Bath Tub

by Ezra Pound

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.

A Virginal

by Ezra Pound

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 hearness
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.

Alba

by Ezra Pound

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

An Immorality

by Ezra Pound

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.

A Pact

by Ezra Pound

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.

Ancient Music

by Ezra Pound

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.

Ballad of the Goodly Fere

by Ezra Pound

Simon Zelotes speaketh it somewhile after the Crucifixion
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 drunk 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'ss 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 he cowed at Genseret
Wi' tvey 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.

Before Sleep

by Ezra Pound

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.

Ezra on the Strike

by Ezra Pound

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.

Francesca

by Ezra Pound

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.

Further Instructions

by Ezra Pound

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.

In the Old Age of the Soul

by Ezra Pound

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.

Invern

by Ezra Pound

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.

Nicotine

by Ezra Pound

A 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.

Portrait D'une Femme

by Ezra Pound

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 or 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.

The Encounter

by Ezra Pound

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.

Song in the Manner of Housman

by Ezra Pound

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.
Woe! woe, etcetera

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

The Logical Conclusion

by Ezra Pound

When earth's last thesis is copied
From the theses that went before,
When idea from fact has departed
And bare-boned factlets shall bore,
When all joy shall have fled from study
And scholarship reign supreme;
When truth shall "baaa" on the hill crests
And no one shall dare to dream;

When all the good poems have been buried
With comment annotated in full
And art shall bow down in homage
To scholarship's zinc-plated bull,
When there shall be nothing to research
But the notes of annotated notes,
And Baalam's ass shall inquire
The price of imported oats;

Then no one shall tell him the answer
For each shall know the one fact
That lies in the special ass-ignment
From which he is making his tract.
So the ass shall sigh uninstructed
While each in his separate book
Shall grind for the love of grinding
And only the devil shall look.

The Needle

by Ezra Pound

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 our 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.

The Seeing Eye

by Ezra Pound

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

The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter

by Ezra Pound

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
Played I about the front gate, pulling flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

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

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

At sixteen you departed,
You went into fat Ku-to-yen, by the river of swirling eddies,
And you have been gone five months.
The monkeys make sorrowful noises 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 in 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.

The Summons

by Ezra Pound

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.

The Tree

by Ezra Pound

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.

These Fought in any Case

by Ezra Pound

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.

The Jewel Stairs' Grievance

by Ezra Pound

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.

Ts'ai Chi'h

by Ezra Pound

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

Villonaud for This Yule

by Ezra Pound

Towards the Noel that morte saison
(Christ make the shepherds' homage dear!)
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
(Skoal! with the dregs if the clear be gone!)
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Ask ye what ghost I dream upon?
(What of the magians' scented gear?)
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
(Such as I drink to mine fashion)
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Where are the joys my heart had won?
(Saturn and Mars to Zeus drawn near!)
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
(Who knows whose was athat paragon?)
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.

Villanelle: The Psychological Hour *by Ezra Pound*

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."

To the Raphaelite Latinists

by Ezra Pound

Ye fellowship that sing the woods and spring,
Poets of joy that sing the day's delight,
Poets of youth that 'neath the aisles of night
Your flowers and sighs against the lintels fling;

Who rose and myrtle in your garlands bring
To marble altars, though their gods took flight
Long ere your dream-shot eyes drank summer light
And wine of old time myth and vintaging,

Take of our praise one cup, though thin the wine
That Bacchus may not bless nor Pan outpour:
Though reed pipe and the lyre be names upon
The wind, and moon-lit dreams be quite out-gone
From ways we tread, one cup to names ye bore,
One wreath from ashes of your songs we twine!

The Lake Isle

by Ezra Pound

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 fragrant cavendish
and the shag,
And the bright Virginia
loose under the bright glass cases,
And a pair of scales not too greasy,
And the whores 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.