Classic Poetry Series

Harriet Monroe

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Harriet Monroe (23 December 1860 – 26 September 1936)

Harriet Monroe was an American editor, scholar, literary critic, and patron of the arts. Monroe is best known as the founder and long time editor of Poetry Magazine. She was born in Chicago, Illinois. She graduated from the Visitation Academy of Georgetown, D.C., in 1879, and afterward devoted herself to literary work.

Monroe was the first editor at Poetry Magazine when she founded it in 1912. From her position as editor, she played a role in the development of modern poetry, both as an early publisher and as a supporter of poets such as Ezra Pound, H. D., T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams , Carl Sandburg and others.

Additionally, Monroe was a long time correspondent of the poets she supported, and her letters provide a wealth of information on the thoughts and motives of modernist poets. She was also a member of the Eagle's Nest Art Colony in Ogle County, Illinois.

Monroe was a member of the Eagle's Nest Art Colony in Ogle County, Illinois, and is mentioned in Erik Larson's The Devil in the White City.

She was the sister-in-law of the Chicago architect John Wellborn Root.

She died in Arequipa, Peru.

Works:

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(Editor with Alice Corbin Henderson) The New Poetry: An Anthology, Macmillan (New York, NY), 1917, revised and enlarged as The New Poetry: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Verse in English, Macmillan (New York,

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A Farewell

GOOD-BY: nay, do not grieve that it is over—
The perfect hour;
That the winged joy, sweet honey-loving rover,
Flits from the flower.

Grieve not,—it is the law. Love will be flying—
Yea, love and all.
Glad was the living; blessed be the dying!
Let the leaves fall.

Harriet Monroe

A Garden In The Desert

So light and soft the days fall—
Like petals one by one
Down from yon tree whose flowers all
Must vanish in the sun.

Like almond-petals down, dear,
Odorous, rosy-white,
Falling to our green world here
Off the thick boughs of night.

One like another still lies—
Tomorrow is today.
Always the buzzing bee flies,
Who never flies away.

Ever the same blue sky rounds
Its chalice for the sun.
The mountains at the world's bounds
Their purple chorals run.

And ever you and I, friend,
Free of this mortal scheme,
Look out beyond desire's end
And dream the spacious dream.

Harriet Monroe

A Letter From Peking

October I5th, 1910.
My friend, dear friend, why should I hear your voice
Over the Babel of voices, suddenly
Calling as from the new world to the old?
Hush!—are you weary? would you follow me?
Would you make dark the house, and shut the door,
Summon steam-pacing trains, wave-racing ships,
To bear you past the high assembled nations—
Past the loud cries, the plucking hands of the age—
Even to the East that drowses on her throne?

Come then—it's good to be alive today;
For yesterday is dead, and dim tomorrow
Flits like a ghost before us, threatening
Our peering eyes with mistily flapping wings.
Grandly the streets loom upward; huge skyscrapers
Catch at the glory of the sunrise, wear
The morning like a mantle, bare their heads
In praise and prayer. And with us on the pavement,
Above us in the air there, and below,
Under our feet, by train and tram and subway,
The people bear the burden of the age—
Each to his work, each to his love, his dream,
The little secret vision of his soul,
Veiled, muffled, trampled, baffled, but agleam:
Our people, eager to work, eager to laugh,
Eager to love—if but to love were easy,
Pausing not for the slow and difficult thing
As they push past their neighbors to the goal.

Now to the ship—down the long crowded wharves,
The tangle of souls and voices threading thinly
Through the slight gangway. Do you see her there—
Huge, black, incredible, fortress-walled in steel,
Hiding her heart of fire? She has no fear;
The fierce waves leap at her, the arrogant storms
Tease at her flying heels, the boastful winds
Front her in vain. Superb, invincible,
From world to world, over the ravenous ocean
Grandly she bears the fruitage of the time:
Rich fields of corn, mill-yields of goods, long train-loads
Of strong machines, man's hope and love and power
Sealed in a million letters, and at last
Even us, the little human mustard seeds—
Dark earth-specks with the kingdom of heaven within.

Gaily we tread the deck, softly we sleep,
Lightly we chatter away the idle days,
While strong hands, from dark hold to sunny mast,
Do our enormous tasks. And now at last
The world again, low chalky cliffs, the shore,
Parked England silvery green, her viny casements

And dewy lawns, her iron towns of toil
Smoke-bound, unfree. And London, stony London,
Gray storehouse of the heaped-up centuries,
Of hidden sins and valors, locked-in joys;
London the empire-hearted, grave with cares
Under her tawny sky that dulls the sun.

We linger not—swiftly the new age runs
And he must haste who takes her by the hand.
Over the Channel! Come! the little houses
And patchwork fields of France. Paris fullblown,
The red red rose of the world, whose golden heart
Lies bare to the greedy sun, whose petals droop
Ever so softly to the falling time,
Most lovely at the signal hour of change.
Germany then, the little patterned cities
Of the old time swept, garnished for the new;
The ancient halls hung with the ancient art,
And musical with high-stringed orchestras
Playing melodious prophecies; gay Berlin,
Garish, unmellowed, pale, but full of hope,
And proud desire.

Ah whither do they march,
These nations with the sweat upon their brows,
Huge burden-bearers, panoplied in steel,
Facing bleak mists of doubt? Will they cast
down Their heavy fears and bathe their brows in light
And freely run across the fields of dawn—
Children of joy, blood brothers born in love,
Valiant for peace as once for murderous war?
Nearer they draw, trimly the sharp rails cut
Their boundaries—twin scissor-blades of fate.
Swift steamers tie their ports together, bring
Tourist ambassadors from state to state.
Bold man-birds fly through the unsentineled air,
And cobweb wires invisible, more strong
Than chains of steel, are spun from tower to tower,
Bridging the oceans, linking capitals,
Binding men's hearts. O kings of the peopled earth,
O men, rulers of kings, dare you resist
Warriors of science, who are blazing trails
Your statesmenship must travel to new goals?
Laggards, beware lest the advancing myriads,
Bound for the promised land, trample you down!

Dark Russia, standing at the Asian gate,
Questions us with her eastward-peering eyes.
Proud Moscow from her hundred towers looks out—
Moscow, bejeweled with domes, magnificent,
Out of her past barbaric gazes far
Into the future, swings her Kremlin portal

To show the sad Siberian wilderness,
And bids us follow through the autumnal days.
Softly we slip along the garnered fields,
Past clustered villages, low-thatched and brown,
Each with a gay church gilded; shimmer down
The shining Urals, and salute at last
Great Asia where in solitude she waits
Under the northern star.

Her forest then,
Level and low; dark little pines, thin birches
Their leaves all golden on the silver stems.
And square-faced peasants crowding to the train,
Slow, sleepy-eyed, thick-bearded. Onward still
Through the stark plains; Baikal blue in its mountains,
The home of wheeling birds that dive and soar.
And by and by a dragon-guarded roof
With gay beasts perched along its tips, that lift
Like the slim corner of a pale new moon
Poised in the sky at sunset.

We have come
To the first gate of the world. The still Pacific
Glitters between the hills. Dark crowds astare
Greet us with chatter and laughter—beardless men
With shaven brows and long thin tasseled braids,
Clad in dim blue under the darkening sun.
The obliterating night curtains our eyes,
And when at last the red dawn draws the veil
A heavy wall looms over us gray and stern
With towered gates fortress-guarded. And our engine,
Steaming and shrieking past the caravans—
The shaggy ponies, little loaded asses,
The slow process camels pacing down—
Scatters the dust of time, pierces the wall,
And pauses under the shadow of yellow roofs
Where the Forbidden City, wide and still,
Lies dreaming in her sunrise-slanted woods.

Peking! She faces us with marble eyes
Inscrutable. She hearkens to our noise
And guards her secret. Shall we win her over—
We with our guns, our dark machines, our mansions
High piled over her lowly curving roofs;
We with our loud commands? Will she arise,
Weary of silence, wave her yellow flag,
Summon her myriads for the modern race,
The huge new tasks, the war for love and light?
Hush! If we wait and listen, will she speak,
Wise woman or child, veiled queen of the dragon throne?

Softly! No steamer, elbowing storms aside,

No engine nosing through the ancient wall,
No hurrying foot, no soul worn or at war,
Shall penetrate the Circle and the Square,
Set with sweet woods, the green wall and the blue,
And touch the three rings of the Temple of Heaven,
The terraced marble seat, cloud-carved and fair,
Where, at the Centre of the Earth, in peace,
The tranquil East, contemplative, serene,
Dwells with the sun and moon.

Hush—bare your head
And strip your spirit free. When you have won
The ultimate Wisdom, seek the wingèd portal
Once more. Then she, the sage, may rise to you,
Hold converse with you, pilgrim of the age,
And take you to her heart and bless your gifts,
And be as one with you forevermore.

Harriet Monroe

A Letter To One Far Away

Dear Wanderer—
The sky is gray,
With flecks of blue
The clouds rush over.
A bird is singing
Far away,
And butterflies
Taste of the clover.
Under the trees
My hammock swings,
And a brave breeze—
The restless rover—
Flutters the leaves
And stirs the grasses
And, whispering riddles,
Lightly passes.
Day after day
My friend and I
Climb up the hills
And search the valleys;
Dip in the brook
That ripples by
And through clear pools
Serenely dallies.
All green and gold,
All song and sweetness,
The old earth is
For summer's pleasure;
Who kisses and goes,
Whose love is fleetness,
Who gives but a season
But gives without measure.
Away with time!—
His wand I capture,
He rules no more
For this brief minute.
The years are gone—
Once more the rapture,
The night of stars
With the secret in it.
Ah, if you were here
Should I grant, I wonder,
The whole round truth
For a birthday token—
How today, tomorrow,
Together, asunder,
We are—no, hush!—
It is best unspoken.
Oh, the truest truth—
No words dare say it!
It hides in the heart
From the poor tongue's treason;

And the deepest joy—
We may never pray it.
It comes and goes
With nor rule nor reason.
Look up!—the sun
Through the clouds' gray portal!
And see—white plumes
In the blue below it!
Behold the dream,
Wide-winged, immortal!
Did I hear your voice?
You are here—I know it!

Harriet Monroe

A Little Old Maid

She grew, like other girls and flowers,
Sheltered and tended daintily;
And told her dolls, through sunny hours,
A prince would come her love to be.

And none denied her as she grew
The kingdom where her prince was lord.
For him she bloomed, and drank the dew
Of youth, and wore the virgin's sword.

From her strong tower of maidenhood
She saw brave men ride east and west;
And dreamed of peace in love's deep wood,
With babies nestling on her breast.

And when no knight her banner bore,
Nor hailed her with love's accolade,
Silent beside her open door
She wondered first, then grew afraid:

Afraid of quickened dust whereof
Life made but phantoms for a show;
Afraid of laughter and of love,
Of God and his unchanging No.

And things the world calls wise and good
She did to bid her fear be still;
Gave largess of her brains and blood,
Chastened her bold, far-wandering will.

But, withering ever at the heart,
She felt her spirit die unborn.
A ghost, she moved on earth apart,
And feared to face the angels' scorn.

Harriet Monroe

A Play Festival In Ogden Park

Oh gay and shining June time!
Oh meadow brave and bright,
Abloom with little children,
All tossing in the light!
They dance and circle singing—
Oh, what a joy to see!
They twinkle in the sunshine,
They shout in company.

Beyond are pointed houses
Patterned against the blue,
With bushes flower-embroidered,
And trees all trim and true.
Around are rows of people
Watching the dainty show,
Guarding the fairy kingdom
Where blossom babies blow.

Their merry little footsteps
Race with the tricksy air,
That puffs their filmy dresses
And frees their shining hair.
All pink and white and golden
Under the round gold sun,
Winging the wind with laughter,
They ring and wreathe and run.

Oh, sweet and soft the world is,
Ever so glad and gay,
All garlanded with children
Who sing and prank and play !
You posy girls wide-petalled,
And boys all round and red,
Dance in the sun forever
Till time goes off to bed!

Harriet Monroe

A Portrait

The little world span round and round,
Singing along her sunny ways,
And all the glory she unwound
She gave to him for joy and praise.

And he, whom lavish morning met
With new-blown flowers and minstrelsy,
Looked on the gift through eyelids wet
For sorrow of satiety.

And he, whom noon put to the proof,
With trumpet-call and weapon blessed,
Fought the brave fight with soul aloof
Harkening for some remote behest.

Not homeward could the winged feet fare,
The lyric laughter choked a sigh—
A wanderer from he knew not where,
Dreamer of dreams, he knew not why.

Harriet Monroe

A Power-Plant

The Fisk Street turbine power station in Chicago

The invisible wheels go softly round and round—
Light is the tread of brazen-footed Power.
Spirits of air, caged in the iron tower,
Sing as they labor with a purring sound.
The abysmal fires, grated and chained and bound,
Burn white and still, in swift obedience cower;
While far and wide the myriad lamps, aflower,
Glow like star-gardens and the night confound.
This we have done for thee, almighty Lord;
Yea, even as they who built at thy command
The pillared temple, or in marble made
Thine image, or who sang thy deathless word.
We take the weapons of thy dread right hand,
And wield them in thy service unafraid.

Harriet Monroe

A Story

He loved her and he was untrue—
Untrue he was, let loved her still;
For out of nether darkness drew
The winds that lashed his wandering will.

She lived in joy all unaware,
In pain and joy his children bore,
While hidden spectres of despair
Drove him to love her more and more.

And when she knew the truth at last,
Suddenly she grew still and strange.
Her rag of haggard youth was cast
Upon the evil winds of change.

She heard, and could not understand;
She paled, and could not bloom again.
So bland death took her by the hand,
Looked in her eyes and made all plain,

Yes, wise death taught her all, and so,
Smiling once more, she kissed and passed.
And he, caught in life's overthrow,
Faced love and death alone at last.

At last, made strong by love and death,
He gave her truth for truth, and knew
Now she had won his perfect faith.
Dying, she doomed him to be true.

Harriet Monroe

Ære Perennius

Look on the dead. Stately and pure he lies
Under the white sheet's marble folds. For him
The solemn bier, the scented chamber dim,
The sacred hush, the bowed heads of the wise,
The slow pomp, the majestical disguise
Of haughty death, the conjurer—even for him,
Poor trivial one, pale shadow on the rim,.
Whom life marked not, but death may not despise.
Now is he level with the great; no king
Enthroned and crowned more royal is, more sure
Of the world's reverence. Yesterday this thing
Was but a man, mortal and insecure;
Now chance and change their homage to him bring
And he is one with all things that endure.

Harriet Monroe

After Sunset

The forest was a shrine for her,
A temple richly dressed;
And worshippers the tall trees were,
Each to his prayer addressed.
Scarce dared I lift my eyes, or stir,
So deeply was I blessed.

She took to herself the waning day
Like a round twilight moon,
Serenely rising far away—
A silvery moon of June,
That whiter than the morning is
And fairer than the noon.

The dim world darkened round her—all
Was night save where she shone,
Save where she stood so slim and small
The shadowed earth upon;
As though the earth were new, and she
Would light its fires anon.

Harriet Monroe

April -- North Carolina

Would you not be in Tryon
  Now that the spring is here,
When mocking-birds are praising
  The fresh, the blossomy year?

Look -- on the leafy carpet
  Woven of winter's browns
Iris and pink azaleas
  Flutter their gaudy gowns.

The dogwood spreads white meshes --
  So white and light and high --
To catch the drifting sunlight
  Out of the cobalt sky.

The pointed beech and maple,
  The pines, dark-tufted, tall,
Pattern with many colors
  The mountain's purple wall.

Hark -- what a rushing torrent
  Of crystal song falls sheer!
Would you not be in Tryon
  Now that the spring is here?

Harriet Monroe

At The Grand Cañon

Wind of the desert, softly blow
Across the cañon shining wide.
Lightly among the temples go
That rise in towers of pride.
Soft, lest they float away
Out in the azure day!

Harriet Monroe

At The Ship’s Rail

The blue sea bends to the ship
Like a dancer with skirts of lace—
Wide diaphanous laces that curl and dip
In the ardent wind's embrace.

Little rainbows dash at the play
And die of joy in the sun;
While over and under, the long bright day,
The sparkling footsteps run.

Lovely, melodious
Is the sound of the dance on the sea.
Softly the white robes trail and toss
Over blue waves that flee.

Harriet Monroe

At The Summit

Where bold Sierras cut the sky
Mount Whitney, of the high most high,
Halts the pale clouds that wander by.

We crept and climbed with eager feet,
Until the world, fulfilled, complete,
Plunged like despair before his seat.

So high the peak was we had won
Earth's air wore thin, its woof undone,
And blue space darkened round the sun.

Yet, as we trembled there and quailed,
Lo, higher yet an eagle scaled
Smooth steeps of air, and sunward sailed.

Harriet Monroe

At Twilight

You are a painter—listen—
I'll paint you a picture too!
Of the long white lights that glisten
Through Michigan Avenue;
With the red lights down the middle
Where the street shines mirror-wet,
While the rain-strung sky is a fiddle
For the wind to feel and fret.
Look! far in the east great spaces
Meet out on the level lake,
Where the lit ships veil their faces
And glide like ghosts at a wake;
And up in the air, high over
The rain-shot shimmer of light,
The huge sky-scrapers hover
And shake out their stars at the night.
Oh, the city trails gold tassels
From the skirts of her purple gown,
And lifts up her commerce castles
Like a jewel-studded crown.
See, proudly she moves on, singing
Up the storm-dimmed track of time—
Road dark and dire,
Where each little light
Is a soul afire
Against the night!
Oh, grandly she marches, flinging
Her gifts at our feet, and singing!—

Have I chalked out a sketch in my rhyme ?

Harriet Monroe

Battle-Flags Of Illinois

Through the red dusk of war they flew
From Shiloh to the sea.
Black fumes from shattered bolts that blew
Withered the colors three,
And crimson rains made sombre stains.

For every flag a grave—yes, more—
For each a score of graves.
Crossed are the heroes' hands that bore,
No wind the furled folds waves.
Sweet be their rest, by soft peace blest.

Is there no end? What mighty host
Of spirits ranged for war
The signal of the Holy Ghost
Shall summon hence afar!
Vast armies wait in solemn state.

Where valor fights for freedom—there,
Till the last slave is free,
These ragged flags will float in air,
There will our heroes be.
And shall we dare fight with them there?

Harriet Monroe

Dance Of The Seasons

I—Spring

Allegro
Wake ! wake !
Out of the snow and the mist,
In rain-wet wind-blown gauze
Of amber and amethyst,
Cometh Spring like a girl.
Trembling and timorous
She peers through the thin white thaws,
Afraid of the winds that whirl
Down paths all perilous
Where her so tender feet are softly going,
Where the rich earth is awaiting her lavish sowing
Of green and purple and white
In the gardens of day and night.

Hither she comes—
Oh lightly she wavers and lingers!
The chill gray storm benumbs
Her lifted rose-petal fingers,
And looses her hair from its fillet of pearl.
Her soft, dew-fringed eyes—
The virginal eyes of a girl—
Gaze at the foam-veiled skies,
Search for the sun who is hiding
His amorous glowing face,
For the spirit of life now gliding
Unseen through every place.

Blown! blown—
Hither and yon,
Dashed by the winds that groan,
Lashed by the frost-elves wan,
Whipped by the envious ghosts of old years long gone,
That chatter and sigh
Of the ruin nigh,
Of death and darkness and sorrow that come anon.
Yet bold and brave
She dares—the young Spring—to dance on that ancient grave,
To dance with delicate feet
On the world's despair and defeat,
On the Winter's ashen pall
That covers all.

Look! she lifts the cover—
A corner of that frost-film pall she lifts.
Now Earth, great-hearted lover,
Smiles upward through the dew-bespangled rifts.
And shining sunbeams, pages of the day,
Roll up the mantle, bear it far away.
Then the Earth laughs with pleasure,

And tosses from her treasure
Store of blue crocuses and snow-drops white,
Glad trilliums that make the woodland bright,
Rich arbutus and shadowy violets:
Till, caught in webs of bloom,
Light-footed Spring her stormy woe forgets,
Forgets the cold, the gloom,
Blesses with errant grace
Each dim forgotten place,
Of drooping leaves, muffles the maples bare
In lilac veils, covers with tenderness
The harsh brown world; and then, when all is won,
Trails languorous dreams, dreams exquisite and rare,
And shrinking from the bold, too-fervid sun,
Shyly gives over
Her royal lover,
Like one afraid of love, who will not stay
Love's perfect day;
Lightly gives over—
Inconstant rover—
Her glad fresh-garlanded world, and like the dew
Sleeps in the blue.
She tosses down
Her flowery crown
Into the lap of Summer—
Glad newcomer!—
Smiling adorns her with treasure of growing things,
And softly sings,
Even while she fades in light—
A wraith, a mist
Of amethyst;
A spirit, a dream that goes,
But whither—who knows?

II—Summer

Andante
Hush! hush! Wake not the drowsy Summer—she would dream,
Heavy with growing things.
Dance lightly where her beauty lies agleam
Under languidly folded wings.
Over the delicate grasses
A breath, a spirit passes,
A song, and the odor of bloom—
Give way! make room!
The Summer has met her lover
By day, by night;
He has brought from the stars—bright rover—
Heaven's fire, heaven's light!
He has filled her with life that sleepeth,
That waits for birth,

As a jewel its bright fire keepeth
In the rock-bound earth.

Softly, slowly
Dance and sway,
While Summer dreameth
The moons away.
Full weary she seemeth
Of love's deep bliss,
But holy, holy
Love's memories.

The idle day is rich with budding things
Whereon the bold sun glares.
Dance lightly, lest you tread on folded wings,
Of flight still unawares.
Ah, delicate your footfall be, while ever
The seed grows in the corn,
The bird in the egg, the deed in the endeavor,
The day in the morn.
Deep in the pool the spawning fishes play;
High in the air the bees buzz out their way.
Everywhere

The children of Summer come crowding in lustrous array—
The myriad children of Summer, beloved of the sun,
Through the long hot noons they are glad of the world they have won.
Bright and fair
They throng in the meadows and shake out the dew from their hair;
They sing in the tree-tops, they dip in the slow-flowing stream;
They nod from the hills, in the valleys their swift feet gleam;
They kneel in the moonlight, the bright stars hear their prayer.
Everywhere
The high sun blesses them,
The moon confesses them,
Old Time with patient smile
Harks to their hope awhile.
They are born, they awake, they arise—now they dance in their bloom;
For their revels of love and of wonder the earth makes room.
Oh, she harks to their song for a season, she kisses their feet;
She gives them her all for their hour—be its joy complete!

The fecund Summer then
Covers her eyes again—
Lies dreaming, at rest:
Young mother of life who is feeding
The world at her breast;
Rich bride of the year, ever needing
But love and light
To give, and give more, and give all
In her great love's might.
Tread softly, give heed to her call—

Oh be still! be fleet!
Hush—hush the sweet sound of your singing;
Pause—pause, ye feet!
Sink down! she bids you rest
Close on her breast.
Down! down ! your rapture flinging
Where all her dreams are winging.
Ah, cease your quest!
Peace!—be blest !
Be blest!

III—Autumn

Scherzo
Come with me—
All that live!
Dance with me—
Love—and give !
Give me your love, ye souls of the corn and the vine!
Dance with me! laugh with me! crowd me! be mine—be mine!
Up from the earth in your splendor of scarlet and gold—
Haste, oh make haste ere the warm rich year grow old!
Ye throngs that gaily rise
Multitudinous
As the red red leaves that flutter
All tremulous
When the wind rides down from the skies;
Ye spirits that shout and mutter
In laughter, in pain,
When the year of her sowing and reaping
Would waste again,
Come spend of your treasure, full heaping,
Be lavish, be bold!
Cast your hope on the winds, from your feet shake the dark damp mould;
Come dancing, come shouting, come leaping,
Ere the earth grow cold!

Come, wings of the air; come, feet that trample the grasses!
Come, tree-top spirits that kindle the leaves to flame!
Come, sprites of the sea that shout when the gray storm passes !
Come, wraiths of the desert whom sorrow nor death may tame!
Come eat of the rich ripe fruit, come drink of the vine!
Come dance till your revels are drunken with joy, with wine.
For the labor is over and done,
The spoil of the battle is won!
Ah trample it, scatter it,
Cast it afar!
The tempests will batter it—
On with the war!
Let your bright robes float, let them whirl with the rush of your feet—
The gauzes of crimson and gold!

Give your will to the winds—they are chasing, they haste, they are fleet,
They are eager and ruthless and bold.
On ! on! till you circle the earth with the rush of your dancing,
With the shout and the song;
Till your choral of crowds, like a river in flood-time advancing,
Bears all things along!
Dance! dance! for the end comes soon—
Do you feel the chill?
White winds of the Winter croon
From their cave in the hill.
Yes, death and the end come soon—
Spread your gaudy robes!
Haste! haste! for the leaves are falling.
Shout! shout! for the storms are calling.
Give all, for the year grows old.
And the world grows cold.

IV—Winter

Finale
Fly! fly!
Gather your white robes close—
Scuttle away!
Look! in the sky
The bleak winds mutter morose
To the swift dark day.
They gather and threaten and scold,
They shiver and shriek in their rage.
They are ashen and icy and old—
Ah, bitter the passion of age!
Flee from them! haste—haste
Through the vengeful weather!
Lest your red blood chill
And your hearts stop still,
Crowd close together
And flee o'er the drear dead waste!

Down! down!
Out of a sky all brown
The dark storm stoops to shrivel the world away.
With ribald wind he strips her,
With stinging sleet he whips her,
With envious frost he withers her green to gray.
Because she was gay and glad,
Beloved of many lovers, fruitful mother
Of many children crowding and killing each other;
Because she was wasteful mad,
Scattering and trampling her riches for death to smother,
Now shall she starve and freeze
And pray on her stiffened knees.
Now shall she helpless lie

And the powers of the air will mock her;
The spirits she dared defy
Will rend her and blind her and shock her.
With white white snow they will bury her passion deep
Till it's dumb, till it's cold.
They will whistle and roar in their triumph
Till her heart grows old.
They will put out her love-lit sun like the torch at a feast,
And with haughty carousals make wanton his court in the east.
They will brush down the stars like white feathers far blown on dark waves,
And the night will be black as they dance on the ghost-thronged graves.

Haste! haste!
Your garments are torn, they are sheeted with ice,
In your wind-loosed hair
The sharp sleet rattles.
You are hurled, chased
To the Winter's lair—
You have paid the price,
You have bled in her battles.
Now shelter your woe
And be still, be still!
Let the night-winds go
To their cave in the hill!
Let the dark clouds flee
Through the gates of the west,
Till the earth rides free
Who was sore oppressed.
For weary of orgies that ravage
Is Winter now.
From the heel of a tyrant savage
She lifts her brow.
See—the wrath of the storm is over,
And under a moon-white cover
Lies the world asleep.
So still, so pale—
Dance bravely, lest you quail
And pause to weep.
Over the flower-soft snow
Still as the lost wind go
To open the gates of day.
Where watches yon lone pale star
Crimson and golden are
The curtains that shake and sway.
Ah, lift them! look, through the rift
Comes the sun adrift!
He kindles the snow to fire,
He bids the dead earth aspire.
Oh dance! From the year’s white grave
New blooms will blow.
Dance lightly, wistfully! save
The life below!

Softly! the world is still—
Hush your errant will!
No longer the dream pursue!
Rest—rest, till the dream come true!
Wait! hope! be still !

Harriet Monroe

Deserted

O Love, my love, it's over then—
Your heart flies free;
And it's now no more us two again,
The door on you and me.
And it's now no more the supper spread,
The stove singing low.
Oh, worlds away your feet are led,
Where wild winds blow!

Oh, seas between and worlds away
Our paths run now.
Go, for more dead than coffined clay
Is love's dead vow.
Go, may your bread be sweet, your rest
As soft and deep be
As when you slept upon my breast
And gave the world for me.

Go, for my heart cries out with pain,
With joy cries out.
Go ! you've unwound the golden chain—
Love's hope, love's doubt.
Go! you were mine—now mine shall be
The whole brave world.
My spirit flutters and is free,
With wings unfurled.

Out of my little house of bliss,
O lost love sweet,
Out of my grief and loneliness
Now will I rise to greet
My friend who begs in the street below,
My friend who prays above;
And each will be—oh, well I know!—
You—you, lost love.

Harriet Monroe

For A Child

E. H. M.
Nov. 17th, 1890—Feb. 13th, 1904

Still he lies,
Pale, wan, and strangely wise.
Under the white coverlet
He lies here sleeping yet,
Though it is day,
Though through the window flares the gaudy day.

With red red roses strewn—
Little red roses smelling sweet of June—
He sleeps the winter dawn away.
The pink and gilded valentines are there
He fingered yesterday;
The toy beasts guard him unaware—
Jumbo the elephant, and Watch the dog,
And Strawberry the big brown furry bear—
The three he kept with him,
Who always slept with him,
Sleep not but stare, like shore lights in a fog.
All is the same—
Table and chairs, the picture in its frame,
The books with covers gay,
And now, the day!—
There through the window flares the gaudy day.

Would it were night, since in my heart is night;
Softly-caressing, blinding, deadening night,
That won him from me! Would that we—we two,
Wound close together soft in folds of white,
Were buried deep in darkness! From the night
Love called him years ago—from the dim blue
Of shadow-souls that throng about the earth
Waiting for birth.
And when the moons were run,
Through blackest night, the windy night of pain,
We rose—we twain—
Into the path of the sun,
And saw God pass to light the world anew.
Now all is done,
The torch is burned away—
Yet it is day!
Now through the window flares the gaudy day.

Did you speak, little one?
At your locked lips I listen evermore.
Say, do you play upon the starry floor,
And pluck the anemone and asphodel
In happy groves, a happy child forever?
Will you not tell?
Or in some spirit world, melodious, clear,

Where life, at truce with death, shall perish never—
There, in high union with harmonious powers,
Will your fair soul to perfect stature rear
And wisdom of a man? And will you be
God's hero, riding out the sun-long hours
To bear to captive stars their liberty?
Or in the heaven of heavens,
Ringed round with seraphim by threes and sevens,
Wrapt deep in holiness intolerable,
Will you the glory of God in raptures tell
Of praise, praise—joy and praise,
Through the unending days?
My little one, will you not speak to me—
To me, who ever heard
Your softest baby word?
Will you tell nothing—nothing? Can you be
Forgetful now and shut your eyes away—
Now it is day,
Now through the window flares the gaudy day?

Me ignorant and impotent and blind !
I look before and after, and unwind
Intricate webs of thought,
By saints and sages wrought,
Only to weave a vapor of the mind
Here between you and me.
All weariness, except that on my breast
Your warm and rosy flesh could softly rest,
And now my dazed eyes see,
Tricked out in mockery,
A heap of ashes marbled with your smile.
Almost I hear the patter of little feet

Your dancing hours repeat.
Almost I hear
Your twitter of laughter at my ear,
And suddenly feel soft arms around me,
As though love crowned me.
Dreams of the night, softly they flit away,
For it is day—
Now through the window flares the gaudy day.

Alone—alone—
Smiling you dare set forth, quick to the call.
Out of my arms into that far unknown
Swiftly you run, nor seem to fear at all.
Don't you know we are one—yes, bone of bone,
Flesh of my flesh, soul of my very soul?
Whither thou goest I must go, or be
A coward thing, ever at war with thee,
Laggard and lost while thou art at the goal.
Ah, leave me not now at the sunrise hour!

Pause but to take my hand
And give the high indomitable command,
And I will mount with thee the topmost tower.
Show me the way,
Now it is day—
Now through the window flares the gaudy day.

Ah, dost thou rise before me,
Braver than I to meet the intrepid morn?
Dost thou implore me
To shut thy silent shadow-house forlorn,
And turn me from its locked and leaden gate
With heart elate?
Oh, shall I don my jewelled robe, and so,
With flourish of flutes and banners all aglow,
Forth to the triumph go?
The hills are hung with purple mist
Beyond thy sepulchre.
There death and life have newly kissed,
For thou art early astir.
There, wedded now who once were twain,
From truth to truth they rise,
And thou shalt lead me in their train
And teach me to be wise.
Not far, not far
I follow where thy footsteps are,
And take from thee
The cup of immortality.
Here in my little place—
My little house of time and space—
Why should I stay—
Now it is day,
Now through the window flares the day—the day?
In crimson and gold arrayed,
Royal and unafraid,
It comes as for the bridal of a queen;
And far before its feet
The dawn on pinions fleet
Spreads wide the path of life, with joy serene.
Beautiful art thou, beautiful and brave—
In vain they dig thy grave.
Thy soul in glory moves, the foremost one
To scale the sun.
And now—and now
I kiss thy tranquil brow,
And go apace
Out in the light to find thy dwelling place.
Now we are bound no more—
Beyond the farthest shore,
And never stray,
For it is day—
Now through the darkness flares the day—the day.

In crimson and gold arrayed,
Royal and unafraid,
It comes as for the bridal of a queen;
And far before its feet
The dawn on pinions fleet
Spreads wide the path of life, with joy serene.
Beautiful art thou, beautiful and brave—
In vain they dig thy grave.
Thy soul in glory moves, the foremost one
Toscale the sun.
And now—and now
I kiss thy tranquil brow,
And go apace
Out in the light to find thy dwelling place.
Now we are bound no more—
I follow thee beyond the rim of space,
Beyond the farthest shore,
And never stray,
Fir it is day—
Now through the darkness flares the day—the day.

Harriet Monroe

For Peace

Flowers grow in the grass,
Baby footfalls pass
Over the fields once red,
Over the hero's head—
For Peace.

The earth, through her leafy veil,
Whispers a magic tale;
And the scholar reads in the clod
The latest news of God—
For Peace.

Brave little wires are spun
For voices to fly upon;
Words out of clouds are caught
From some witch's woof of thought
For Peace.
And the cataract's foamy troubles
Illumine a million bubbles,
In some city far away
Turning the night to day—
For Peace.

Proud trains, heralds austere,
Bring far-off nations near,
Piercing the mountain's crown,
Treading the barriers down—
For Peace.

Swift ships, that pound the sea,
Set the earth-chained spirit free,
Show the whole round world unrolled
Before the young moon grows old—
For Peace.

And the white-winged aeroplane
Laughs, in its mad disdain,
At limits and barricades
And cruisers and cavalcades—
For Peace.

Even the war engines dread—
The guns with bomb-shells fed,
The grim gray battle-ships—
Shout through their iron lips
For Peace.

Oh, never a hero's grave
But for Peace his life he gave!
And the warrior bears his scar,
And the poet sings of war
For Peace.

Harriet Monroe

From the Commemoration Ode

WASHINGTON

WHEN dreaming kings, at odds with swift paced time,
Would strike that banner down,
A nobler knight than ever writ or rhyme
With fame's bright wreath did crown
Through armed hosts bore it till it floated high
Beyond the clouds, a light that cannot die!
Ah, hero of our younger race!
Great builder of a temple new!
Ruler, who sought no lordly place!
Warrior, who sheathed the sword he drew!
Lover of men, who saw afar
A world unmarred by want or war,
Who knew the path, and yet forbore
To tread, till all men should implore;
Who saw the light, and led the way
Where the gray would might greet the day;
Father and leader, prophet sure,
Whose will in vast works shall endure,
How shall we praise him on this day of days,
Great son of fame who has no need of praise?

How shall we praise him? Open wide the doors
Of the fair temple whose broad base he laid.
Through its white halls a shadowy cavalcade
Of heroes moves o'er unresounding floors—
Men whose brawned arms upraised these columns high,
And reared the towers that vanish in the sky,—
The strong who, having wrought, can never die.

LINCOLN

AND, lo! leading a blessed host comes one
Who held a warring nation in his heart;
Who knew love's agony, but had no part
In love's delight; whose mightly task was done
Through blood and tears that we might walk in joy,
And this day's rapture own no sad alloy.
Around him heirs of bliss, whose bright brows wear
Palm-leaves amid their laurels ever fair.
Gaily they come, as though the drum
Beat out the call their glad hearts knew so well:
Brothers once more, dear as of yore,
Who in a noble conflict nobly fell.
Their blood washed pure you banner in the sky,
And quenched the brands laid 'neath these arches high—
The brave who, having fought, can never die.

Then surging through the vastness rise once more
The aureoled heirs of light, who onward bore
Through darksome times and trackless realms of ruth

The flag of beauty and the torch of truth.
They tore the mask from the foul face of wrong;
Even to God’s mysteries they dared aspire;
High in the choir they built yon altar-fire,
And filled these aisles with color and with song:
The ever-young, the unfallen, wreathing for time
Fresh garlands of the seeming-vanished years;
Faces long luminous, remote, sublime,
And shining brows still dewy with our tears.
Back with the old glad smile comes one we knew—
We bade him rear our house of joy today.
But Beauty opened wide her starry way,
And he passed on. Bright champions of the true,
Soldiers of peace, seers, singers ever blest,—
From the wide ether of a loftier quest
Their winged souls throng our rites to glorify,—
The wise who, having known, can never die.

DEMOCRACY

FOR, lo! the living God doth bare his arm.
No more he makes his house of clouds and gloom.
Lightly the shuttles move within his loom;
Unveiled his thunder leaps to meet the storm.
From God’s right hand man takes the powers that sway
A universe of stars.
He bows them down; he bids them go or stay;
He tames them for his wars.
He scans the burning paces of the sun,
And names the invisible orbs whose courses run
Through the dim deeps of space.
He sees in dew upon a rose impearled
The swarming legions of a monad world
Begin life’s upward race.
Voices of hope he hears
Long dumb to his despair,
And dreams of golden years
Meet for a world so fair.
For now Democracy doth wake and rise
From the sweet sloth of youth.
By storms made strong, by many dreams made wise,
He clasps the hand of Truth.
Through the armed nations lies his path of peace,
The open book of knowledge in his hand.
Food to the starving, to the oppressed release,
And love to all he bears from land to land.
Before his march the barriers fall,
The laws grow gentle at his call.
His glowing breath blows far away
The fogs that veil the coming day,—
That wondrous day
When earth shall sing as through the blue she rolls

Laden with joy for all her thronging souls.
Then shall want’s call to sin resound no more
Across her teeming fields. And pain shall sleep,
Soothed by brave science with her magic lore;
And war no more shall bid the nations weep.
Then the worn chains shall slip from man’s desire,
And ever higher and higher
His swift foot shall aspire;
Still deeper and more deep
His soul its watch shall keep,
Till love shall make the world a holy place,
Where knowledge dare unveil God’s very face.

Not yet the angels hear life’s last sweet song.
Music unutterably pure and strong
From earth shall rise to haunt the peopled skies,
When the long march of time,
Patient in birth and death, in growth and blight,
Shall lead man up through happy realms of light
Unto his goal sublime.

Harriet Monroe

His Stenographer

As he dictates to her

Does she love you?—well, I wonder—
Married twenty years, they say!
You, so bald and fat and funny,
Grubbing like a mole for money?
Guess she likes to spend the plunder—
Gee—she knows the way!

She's a grand one—Lord! what dresses!
Handsome too, proud as a queen—
With her doings in the papers,
Dinners, dances, all the capers,
Likes to lead the show, my guess is!
You're the gold machine!

If she knew you as I know you,
Would she spend it—say?
If she knew each trick and quibble—
Little fishes hooked that nibble,
Business murders—would she show you
Such a grand-stand play?

You're a savage money-maker—
Good to her, though, sure—and me.
Kind old pirate! What in thunder
Does she think of you, I wonder?
What neat stories do you take her,
So she will not see?

Harriet Monroe

I Love my Life, but not too well

I love my life, but not too well
To give it to thee like a flower,
So it may pleasure thee to dwell
Deep in its perfume but an hour.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To sing it note by note away,
So to thy soul the song may tell
The beauty of the desolate day.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To cast it like a cloak on thine,
Against the storms that sound and swell
Between thy lonely heart and mine.
I love my life, but not too well.

Harriet Monroe

In The Beginning

WHEN sunshine met the wave,
Then love was born;
Then Venus rose to save
A world forlorn.

For light a thousand wings
Of joy unfurled,
And bound with golden rings
The icy world.

And color flamed the earth
With glad desire,
Till life sprang to the birth,
Fire answering fire,

And so the world awoke,
And all was done,
When first the ocean spoke
Unto the sun.

Harriet Monroe

In The Louvre

Queen Karomana, slim you stand,
In bronze with little flecks of gold—
Queen Karomana.
O royal lady, lift your hand,
Shatter the stone museum cold,
Queen Karomana.

The wide Nile sleeps, the desert stings
With color. Shake your tresses free,
Queen Karomana !
The sleepy lotus shines and swings—
Loose your bound limbs and sail with me
In a smooth shallop to the sea,
Queen Karomana!

Queen Karomana, still so mute,
So delicate, yet cold as snow,
Queen Karomana?
An ice-wind, boldly resolute,
Rippled your thin robe long ago,
And froze you into bronze—I know—
But left your garment's flecks of gold
And the slim grace men loved of old,
Queen Karomana!

Harriet Monroe

In Tuolumne Meadows

I Love to sit in the sun
And watch the foaming Lyell
Leap over its granite bed.
I love these days that run
On a burnished golden dial
With the blue sky overhead.

I love to waken at night
And whisper the stars above me,
And feel the fingering breeze.
So still is the world, so right,
Where even the black pines love me,
And the white moon guards my ease.

I love the upward ways
To the sun-tipped crest of the mountains
High over the billowy world;
Where the wind sings hymns of praise,
And the snows break into fountains,
And life is a flag unfurled.

I love—ah, beloved, what bliss
Would shatter the ice like a river
And sing all the way to the sea,
If the world could be lost for this,
And you from your sorrow forever
Could rest on the heart of me !

Harriet Monroe

Lake Louise

Bluer than Helen's eyes she lies
Under the blue cloud-drifting skies;
A daughter fair of light and air
Dropped among warrior mountains there.

White glaciers kiss her feet so fleet—
Oh fugitive, too rare and sweet!
Will she not fling them off that cling,
And rise, a bluebird on the wing?

Will she not rise and stray away,
A blue gleam on the brow of day?
Look—still she stays, and bright, snow-white,
The glaciers guard her day and night!

Harriet Monroe

Love Songs

I
I LOVE my life, but not too well
To give it to thee like a flower,
So it may pleasure thee to dwell
Deep in its perfume but an hour.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To sing it note by note away,
So to thy soul the song may tell
The beauty of the desolate day.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To cast it like a cloak on thine,
Against the storms that sound and swell
Between thy lonely heart and mine.
I love my life, but not too well.

II
Your love is like a blue, blue wave
The little rainbows play in.
Your love is like a mountain cave
Cool shadows darkly stay in.

It thrills me like great gales at war,
It soothes like softest singing.
It bears me where clear rivers are,
With reeds and rushes swinging;
Or out to pearly shores afar
Where temple bells are ringing.

III
And is it pain to you
That we must love and part?
Ah, if you only knew
The gladness in my heart!

Love is enough. Each day
I look upon the sun,
He loves me! I shall say,
Now is my life begun.

He loves me! Every night,
On the dark verge of sleep,
The rapture will alight
And to my bosom creep.

Peace, for I should not dare
A keener joy implore.
My soul shall feel no care—
Until you love no more.

Harriet Monroe

Lullaby

My little one, sleep softly
Among the toys and flowers.
Sleep softly, O my first-born son,
Through all the long dark hours.
And if you waken far away
I shall be wandering too.
If far away you run and play
My heart must follow you.

Sleep softly, O my baby,
And smile down in your sleep.
Here are red rose-buds for your bed—
Smile, and I will not weep.
We made our pledge—you had no fear;
What then to fear have I?
Though long you sleep, I shall be near;
So hush—we must not cry.

Sleep softly, dear one, softly—
They cannot part us now;
Forever rest here on my breast,
My kiss upon your brow.
What though they hide a little grave
With dream-flowers false or true?
What difference? We will just be brave
Together—I and you.

Harriet Monroe

March

I See the snow-drops flutter
Their white wings in the gale.
I hear the robin utter
On high his gallant tale.

Look where the rash wind chases
With clouds the climbing sun!
The day makes merry faces—
Gaily her gray steeds run.

The bare brown trees are swinging,
The curled waves roll and rail.
Ho!—madcap Spring comes singing
On frosty Winter's trail!

Harriet Monroe

Maternity

After the months of torpor,
Weakness and ache and strain,
After this day's deep drowning
In stormy seas of pain—
To feel your hand, my baby,
Upon my bosom lain!

My little one, my baby,
What woes your touches quell!
It is the Christ-child coming
To save a soul from hell.
Out in the happy gardens
You bring me now to dwell.

My baby—O beloved,
Mine only you shall be,
Even as the soul our Lord's is,
Who died upon the tree.
Have I not won you, dearest,
By pain, as he won me?

So sweet, so soft, so little,
Such a wee helpless flower !
How may I shield you, dear one,
From the world's ruthless power,
And hold you close and warm here,
As now in your first hour?

Harriet Monroe

Melodies

The patter of a baby's feet
Upon the floor,
His babble at the door—
Ah, these are sounds too sweet, too sweet!
Blue sky, save me from tears!
Soft summer wind, stop up mine ears!
The patter of a baby's feet,
His chatter—oh, too tender sweet !

Harriet Monroe

Mountain Song

I have not where to lay my head:
Upon my breast no child shall lie;
For me no marriage feast is spread:
I walk alone under the sky.

Harriet Monroe

Myself

What am I? I am Earth the mother,
With all her nebulous memories;
And the young Day, and Night her brother,
And every god that was and is.

As Eve I walked in paradise,
Dreaming of nations, braving death
For knowledge; nor begrudged the price
When the first baby first drew breath.

I sang Deborah's triumph song;
I struck the foe with Judith's sword;
'Twas I who to the angel said,
'Behold the handmaid of the Lord!'

I was fair Helen, she for whom
A nation was content to die;
And Cleopatra, in whose doom
The world went down with Antony.

I am the harlot in the street,
And the veiled nun all undefiled;
In me must queen and beggar meet,
Wise age hark to the little child.

I am the life that ever is,
And the new glory that shall be;
The pain that dies, and the brave bliss
That mounts to immortality.

Harriet Monroe

Nancy Hanks

Prairie child,
Brief as dew,
What winds of wonder
Nourished you?

Rolling plains
Of billowy green,
Far horizons,
Blue, serene;

Lofty skies
The slow clouds climb,
Where burning stars
Beat out the time:

These, and the dreams
Of fathers bold,
Baffled longings,
Hopes untold,

Gave to you
A heart of fire,
Love like deep waters,
Brave desire.

Ah, when youth's rapture
Went out in pain,
And all seemed over,
Was all in vain?

O soul obscure,
Whose wings life bound,
And soft death folded
Under the ground;

Wilding lady,
Still and true,
Who gave us Lincoln
And never knew:

To you at last
Our praise, our tears,
Love and a song
Through The nation’s years!

Mother of Lincoln,
Our tears, our praise;
A battle-flag
And the victor's bays!

Harriet Monroe

New-Born

She is so wee,
So wise and dear
Her eyes can see,
Her ears can hear,
The flowers that grow
Below the snow,
The birds that peep
In their eggs asleep,
The songs we sing her
No other has heard,
The love we bring her
With never a word.

Harriet Monroe

Night In State Street

Art thou he?—
The seer and sage, the hero and lover—yea,
The man of men, then away from the haughty
day
Come with me!

Ho—ho! to the night—
The spangled night that would the noon outstare.
Her skirts are fringed with light,
She is girdled and crowned with gems of fire that flare.
The city is dizzy with the thrill of her—
Her shining eyes and shadowy floating hair;
And curious winds her nebulous garments blur,
Blowing her moon-white limbs and bosom bare.

She beckons me—
Down the deep street she goes to keep her tryst.
Come—come—oh follow! oh see

The many-windowed walls uprear so high
They dim and quiver and float away in mist
Tangling the earth and sky.
And the pale stars go by
Like spirits masterful and still and strong,
Dragging the heavy nets of life along.

Down in the deep
Lightly the nets enmesh us with the swarm
Of huddled human things that, soft and warm,
Beat out so close the pulses of their lives.
We crowd and creep,
We jostle and push out of our halls and hives,
We chatter and laugh and weep.
Ah, do you hear
The choral of voices, each the secret hiding?
Do you see the warren of souls, each one abiding
In separate solitude, remote, austere?

Here in the glare of the street we cling together
Against the warning darkness, the still height Of the awful night.
We blow like a feather
From hope to hope along the winds of fate
Importunate.
The lettered lights that twinkle in and out
Lure us and laugh at us, beckon and flout,
Flashing their slangy symbols in our eyes,
Blurting their gaudy lies.
The bold shop-windows flaunt their empty wares—
Jewelled or tinselled shows of things,
The fripperies and furnishings
Wherein stark life will stifle her shiverings
Ere forth in the dawn she fares.

Ah, tyranny perilous!
Vain shows that master us!
See the gay girls fluttering wistfully,
Where waxen dummies grin in gowns of lace.
Watch yonder woman in black, whose dimmed eyes see
Soft baby things folded with tender grace.
And look at the children crowding and shouting there
Where dancing dolls jiggle and jerk and stare.
They hover and cling
Possessed by signs and shadows of the thing.
They moor their bark
Close to the shore and fathom not the dark—
The dark that glooms afar
Beyond the invisible star,
Beyond faith's boundaries,
The plausible was and is.

Come, ye adventurous,
Open your hearts to us!
You tiny newsboy, calling extras there,
Pitiful burden-bearer, pale with blight,
What of the night?—
The sullen night that brings you, little one,
So heavy a load of care,
While happier children sleep from sun to sun?
And you, wan youth, haggard and spent,
By mad thirst driven and rent—
Thirst of the body, thirst of the soul—
To what dark goal
Does reeling night lead you, her listless prey,
To gorge you and slay,
And hide forever from the searching day?
And you, furtive and flaunting girl,
Whose heavy-lidded eyes unfurl
Red signal fires, the while, demure,
Your brooding lips deny their lure—
Ah, does the lewd night lash you to her cave,
And will you never her ribald rage out-brave,
And rise no more forlorn
To greet the morn?

The street grows insolent.
With cries of dark delight
And gestures impudent
It rends the robe of night.
Up to the silent sky
It shouts the human cry.

The crowds push in and out
By all the open ways,
Eager to stare and shout

At vaudeville waifs of plays.
They drop their coins and laugh
At the wheezy phonograph,
They hush for the noisy drone
Of the croaking megaphone.
That litters life with jest
They pause that they may not go
On life's eternal quest.
They stifle truth with speech,
They mimic love with lust,
For the glitter of gilt they reach
And cover the gold with dust.
They stoop to the din and glare
Who have the lofty night for comrade rare.
They grope along the ground
Whose stature like the night with stars is crowned.

Oh piteous!
Oh struggle vain!
Of puppets emulous,
We strive and strain
To forge for our limbs a chain.
Come, thou deep-hearted Night, so dark and bright !
Come, holy Night, come, lawless, dissolute Night!
Come, human Night, hushing thy dreams divine!
Give me thy dreams, O Night—they shall be mine!—
Mine and this beggar's, though we lie to thee!
Mine and this harlot's, though from thee we
flee! Mine and this worldling's, though with might and right
We hide them from our sight.
Thy shadowed eyes the truth behold, and we—
We too shall know the truth, and so be free!
Even now—yea, now
Through lies and vanities we pry and peer.
Even now we bow
At little shrines where pale fires flicker and fleer.
Hark! in the echoing street
The drums that bang and beat,
Where the curb-stone preachers tell
The way to heaven and hell.
Look! in yon window there
A man through a glass astare
At atoms and embryos,
The source whence all life flows.
Search the beginning and end.
We may not choose but follow—
Yes, you and I and these—
The fume of the noisome hollow,
The gleam of the Pleiades.
Wherever one goes in quest
With his quest we are cursed or blest.
And the street, with its blazing mockery of

noon, Leads on to the quiet stars, to the lofty moon.

The little lights go out now row on row,
The dim crowds glide away.
The shadowed street
Pillars the vaulted sky.
And Night, proud Night,
Rapt in her dreams, with stately tread and slow
Patrols the drowsy world. O friend complete,
How may we read her deep delight aright?

Art thou he—
The seer and sage, the hero and lover—yea,
The man of men, then even to the gates of day
Lead thou me!

Harriet Monroe

On The Porch

As I lie roofed in, screened in,
From the pattering rain,
The summer rain—
As I lie
Snug and dry,
And hear the birds complain:

Oh, billow on billow,
Oh, roar on roar,
Over me wash
The seas of war.
Over me—down—down—
Lunges and plunges
The huge gun with its one blind eye,
The armored train,
And, swooping out of the sky,
The aeroplane.
Down—down—
The army proudly swinging
Under gay flags,
The glorious dead heaped up like rags,
A church with bronze bells ringing,
A city all towers,
Gardens of lovers and flowers,
The round world swinging
In the light of the sun:
All broken, undone,
All down—under
Black surges of thunder …

Oh, billow on billow
Oh, roar on roar,
Over me wash
The seas of war …

As I lie roofed in, screened in,
From the pattering rain,
The summer rain—
As I lie
Snug and dry,
And hear the birds complain.

Harriet Monroe

On The Train

I

THE lady in front of me in the car,
With little red coils close over her ears,
Is talking with her friend;
And the circle of ostrich foam around her hat,
Curving over like a wave,
Trembles with her little windy words.
What she is saying, I wonder,
That her feathers should tremble
And the soft fur of her coat should slip down over her shoulders?
Has her string of pearls been stolen,
Or maybe her husband?

II

He is drunk, that man -
Drunk as a lord, a lord of the bibulous past. [sic]
He shouts wittily from his end of the car to the man in the corner;
He bows to me with chivalrous apologies.
He philosophizes, plays with the wisdom of the ages,
Flings off his rags,
Displays his naked soul -
Athletic, beautiful, grotesque.
In the good time coming,
When men drink no more,
Shall we ever see a nude soul dancing
Stript and free
In the temple of his god?

III

She comes smiling into the car
With irridescent bubbles of children.
She blooms in the close plush seats
Like a narcissus in a bowl of stones.
She croons to a baby in her lap -
The trees come swinging by to listen,
And the electric lights in the ceiling are stars.

Harriet Monroe

Our Canal

To Colonel Goethals and the Other Laborers in the Canal Zone

In lazy laughing Panama—
O flutter of ribbon 'twixt the seas!—
The low-roofed houses lie afloat,
White foam-drift of the Caribbees.
Under lithe palms that fan the sky
Down in each drowsy plaza there,
Brown-footed girls go glancing by
With red hibiscus in their hair.
Low mountains, trailing veils of cloud,
In the two oceans dip their feet,
And hear the proud tides roaring loud
Where Andes with Sierras meet.
O Panama! O ribbon-twist
That ties the continents together,
Now East and West shall slip your tether
And keep their ancient tryst.

What are you doing here,
Young men, with your engines vast?
Sons of the pioneer
Who conquered wastes austere
And from ocean to ocean passed;
Sons of the men who made
Reaper and telegraph,
Steamer and aeroplane—
All the iron-handed things,
Swift feet and tongues and wings,
That would make the old gods laugh
For the bitter games they played
With the secrets they kept in vain:
What are you doing here,
Young men, with your dredges and drills
That level the ancient hills
Into a path for ships?
Open your eyes and lips—
What do you see and hear?

'Oh, we build you the world's last wonder,
The thing not made with hands.
Our steel beasts gnaw asunder
The locked and laboring lands.
We choke the torrent's rage,
And bid him his wrath assuage
By drowning the jungle deep.
In steel-locked chambers gray
We hold his floods at bay,
On wide blue lakes asleep.
Now shall the brave ships ride
Over the crouching hill

From eager tide to tide,
That so we may fulfil
The iron century's will;
That so our country, maker of tools sublime,
The nations may surprise
With this last gift of the grand old workman,
Time;
His prodigy powerful, delicate, sentient, wise,
Perfect in strange completeness, strong to obey,
Strong to compel the world along its way
And praise man's triumph in its mighty rhyme.'

But what are you doing here,
Young men, with your flags?—
With your glamour of joy severe
With your villages up the hill,
The screened little houses gay,
Where the good of all is the will
Of each in a grand new way?
Sons of the men who founded
New states in the wilds, to be
Garden and range unbounded
For young Democracy;
Sons of the heroes dear
Who fought for liberty,
What are you doing here?

'Look, it's the same old fight
Out of the dark to the light;
Never the end shall be
Till the last slave is free!
Here while we dig the Ditch
We would build you a perfect state,
Where service makes men great
And the great scorn to be rich;
Where each man has his place
And a measure more than his meed—.
A banner of joy to grace
The strength of the daily deed;
Where Disease, trapped in his lair
With Squalor and Want and Care,
Is slain with the poison fume
He loosed for the proud world's doom;
Where the Work is a marching song
Sung by us all together,
Bearing the race along
Through good and evil weather.
Oh tell them, shout it through the halls of time !—
When the Big Chief unrolls his glorious plan,
Draws hearts and hands together in perfect rhyme,
Nothing shall be impossible to Man!'

But what are you doing here,
Young men, with your gates?
With your bells and beacons clear
Where the hope of the whole world waits?
With your call across the seas
To the ships that circle afar,
To the nations that burn and freeze
Each under her separate star?
Who followed the Truth austere,
Of poets and prophets grave—
What are you doing here?

'Hush! we wait at the gate
Till the dream shall be the law.
He gave us our beacons and bells
Who first the vision saw,
And the fleets of the world in state
Shall follow his caravels.
Ghost-led, our ships shall sail
West to the ancient East.
Once more the quest of the Grail,
And the greatest shall be the least.
We shall circle the earth around
With peace like a garland fine;
The warring world shall be bound
With a girdle of love divine.
What build we from coast to coast?
It's a path for the Holy Ghost.
Oh Tomorrow and Yesterday
At its gate clasp hands, touch lips;
They shall send men forth in ships
To find the perfect way.

'All that was writ shall be fulfilled at last.
Come—till we round the circle, end the story.
The west-bound sun leads forward to the past
The thundering cruisers and the caravels.
Tomorrow you shall hear our song of glory
Rung in the chime of India's temple bells.'

O lazy laughing Panama!
O flutter of ribbon 'twixt the seas!
Pirate and king your colors wore
And stained with blood your golden keys.
Now what strange guest, on what mad quest,
Lifts up your trophy to the breeze!
O Panama, O ribbon-twist
That ties the continents together,
Now East and West shall slip your tether
And keep their ancient tryst.

Harriet Monroe

Pain

She heard the children playing in the sun,
And through her window saw the white-stemmed trees
Sway like a film of silver in the breeze
Under the purple hills; and one by one
She noted chairs and cabinets, and spun
The pattern of her bed's pale draperies:
Yet all the while she knew that each of these
Was a dull lie, in irony begun.
For down in hell she lay, whose livid fires
Love may not quench, whose pangs death may not quell.
The round immensity of earth and sky
Shrank to a point that speared her. Loves' desires,
Darkened to torturing ministers of hell,
Whose mockery of joy deepened the lie.
Little eternities the black hours were,
That no beginning knew, that knew no end.
Day waned, and night came like a faithless friend,
Bringing no joy; till slowly over her
A numbness grew, and life became a blur,
A silence, an oblivion, a dark blend
Of dim lost agonies, whose downward trend
Led into time's eternal sepulchre.
And yet, when, after aeons infinite
Of dark eclipse she woke—lo, it was day!
The pictures hung upon the walls, each one;
Under the same rose-patterned coverlet
She lay; spring was still young, and still the play
Of happy children sounded in the sun.

Harriet Monroe

Quatrains

I
Give to brave deeds emblazoned shrines
Where reverent memories may throng.
For them Art draws her perfect lines
In stone, in color, and in song.

II
For the Sierra Club Lodge in Yosemite Valley

Here, traveller, pause along your upward way—
Enter and rest, and search your soul today.
High are the mountains where your feet would fare—
Let wisdom lead, that joy may find you there.

III
The Monument by Saint-Gaudens in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington

I WAS a woman who now sleep so still.
I laughed and wept, I loved and had my will.
Com'st thou to question? com'st thou here to
pray? Life nor death matters now, nor good nor ill.

Harriet Monroe

Rubens

Here you are, grand old sensualist!
And here are the three goddesses
displaying their charms to Paris.
It was all one to you &mdash goddesses, saints, court ladies &mdash
Your world was all curves of flesh
rolling curves repeated like a shell.
Mary Magdalen was almost as good copy as Venus,
Angels might be voluptuous as nymphs.

It was a rich old gorgeous world you painted &mdash
For kinds or prelates, what mattered! &mdash palace or church!
You had a wonderful, glorious time! &mdash
And no doubt the ladies loved you.

Harriet Monroe

Sierran Song

To the California Sierra Club

Come climb the mountain trails with me,
Where pine-trees plume the sky,
Where snowy peaks salute the sea
When herald winds pass by.
Wah ho! the day is blue,
The night with stars aglow;
And all the dreams come true
Up there—wah ho!

The stream runs dancing on its way,
The meadows flush with flowers.
The gay birds sing a roundelay
Through all the crystal hours.
Wah ho! the sky is blue,
The world is soft as snow;
And all the dreams come true
Up there—wah ho!

Come hit the trail—the cliff-bound vale
Our stately house shall be.
Our feet shall tread beyond the pale
Of dull mortality.
Wah ho! the world is new,
And heaven is all aglow!
And every dream comes true
Up there—wah ho!

Harriet Monroe

The Blue Ridge

STILL and calm,
In purple robes of kings,
The low-lying mountains sleep at the edge of the world.
The forests cover them like mantles;
Day and night
Rise and fall over them like the wash of waves.

Asleep, they reign.
Silent, they say all.
Hush me, O slumbering mountains -
Send me dreams.

Harriet Monroe

The Childless Woman

O Mother of that heap of clay, so passive on your breast,
Now do you stare at death, woman, who yesterday were blest?
Now do you long to fare afar, and guide him on the way
Where he must wander all alone, his little feet astray?
But I now, but I now—
Sons of me seven and seven
The high God seals upon the brow,
And summons from his heaven.

Blest as a bride were you, woman, that time of years agone,
When love, giver of life, came close and led you to his throne.
And blest were you—have you forgot?—when through the moons of pain
The life love-given tugged at your heart and bound you with its chain.
But I now, but I now—
Seared by the high God's scorn—
Lives that will never come to birth
Body of me has borne.

And when the hour was come, woman, your dark and perilous hour,
When the twin spirits, Death and Life, clutched you with jealous power,
Rent by their war you lay half lost, until a baby's cry
Summoned you forth past world on world to sit with God on high.
But I now, but I now—
Never my baby's voice
Has called me forth from vales of woe
With seraphs to rejoice.

You in your arms have clasped him, woman, and fed him at your breast.
You sang him little songs at night, and lulled him to his rest.
The ages gone were yours then, and yours the years to be.
You gave him of your hope and saw the light no eye shall see.
But I now, but I now—
Sons of me born in dream
Cry out for robes of flesh; I see
Their wistful eyes agleam.

O mother of that heap of clay so passive on your breast—
Now do you stare at death, woman?—nay, peace, for you are blest.
Blest are you in your joy, woman, blest are you in your pain—
Once more he calls you past the worlds to sit. with God again.
But I now, but I now—
Sons of me nine and nine,
That looked on life and death with me,
Are neither God’s nor mine.

Harriet Monroe

The Fortunate One

BESIDE her ashen hearth she sate her down,
Whence he she loved had fled,—
His children plucking at her sombre gown
And calling for the dead.

One came to her clad in the robes of May,
And said sweet words of cheer,
Bidding her bear the burden in God’s way,
And feel her loved ones near.

And she who spake thus would have given, thrice blest,
Long lives of happy years,
To clasp his children to a mother’s breast,
And weep his widow’s tears.

Harriet Monroe

The Garden

Hiding under the hill,
Heavy with trailing robes and tangled veils of green,
Till only its little haggard face was visible,
The garden lay shy and wistful,
Lovelorn for summer departing,
Blowing its little trickling fountain tune into the air.
And over all, hushing, soothing,
Lay the clematis
Like early snow.

Harriet Monroe

The Giant Cactus Of Arizona

The cactus in the desert stands
Like time's inviolate sentinel,
Watching the sun-washed waste of sands
Lest they their ancient secrets tell.
And the lost lore of mournful lands
It knows alone and guards too well.

Wiser than Sphynx or pyramid,
It points a stark hand at the sky,
And all the stars alight or hid
It counts as they go rolling by;
And mysteries the gods forbid
Darken its heavy memory.

I asked how old the world was—yea,
And why yon ruddy mountain grew
Out of hell's fire. By night nor day
It answered not, though all it knew,
But lifted, as it stopped my way,
Its wrinkled fingers toward the blue.

Inscrutable and stern and still
It waits the everlasting doom.
Races and years may do their will—
Lo, it will rise above their tomb,
Till the drugged earth has drunk her fill
Of light, and falls asleep in gloom.

Harriet Monroe

The Hotel

The long resounding marble corridors, the
shining parlors with shining women in
them.
The French room, with its gilt and garlands
under plump little tumbling painted loves'.
The Turkish room, with its jumble of many
carpets and its stiffly squared un-Turkish
chairs.
The English room, all heavy crimson and gold,
with spreading palms lifted high in round
green tubs.
The electric lights in twos and threes and hundreds,
made into festoons and spirals and
arabesques, a maze and magic of bright
persistent radiance.
The people sitting in corners by twos and
threes, and cooing together under the glare.
The long rows of silent people in chairs, watching
with eyes that see not while the patient
band tangles the air with music.
The bell-boys marching in with cards, and
shouting names over and over into ears
that do not heed.
The stout and gorgeous dowagers in lacy white
and lilac, bedizened with many jewels, with
smart little scarlet or azure hats on their
gray-streaked hair.
The business men in trim and spotless suits,
who walk in and out with eager steps, or
sit at the desks and tables, or watch the
shining women.
The telephone girls forever listening to far
voices, with the silver band over their hair
and the little black caps obliterating their
ears.
The telegraph tickers sounding their perpetual
chit—chit-chit from the uttermost ends of
the earth.
The waiters, in black swallow-tails and white
aprons, passing here and there with trays
of bottles and glasses.
The quiet and sumptuous bar-room, with purplish
men softly drinking in little alcoves,
while the bar-keeper, mixing bright liquors,
is rapidly plying his bottles.
The great bedecked and gilded café, with its
glitter of a thousand mirrors, with its little
white tables bearing gluttonous dishes
whereto bright forks, held by pampered
hands, flicker daintily back and forth.
The white-tiled, immaculate kitchen, with many
little round blue fires, where white-clad

cooks are making spiced and flavored
dishes.
The cool cellars filled with meats and fruits, or
layered with sealed and bottled wines
mellowing softly in the darkness.
The invisible stories of furnaces and machines,
burrowing deep down into the earth, where
grimy workmen are heavily laboring.
The many-windowed stories of little homes and
shelters and sleeping-places, reaching up
into the night like some miraculous,
highpiled honeycomb of wax-white cells.
The clothes inside of the cells—the stuffs, the
silks, the laces; the elaborate delicate
disguises that wait in trunks and drawers and
closets, or bedrape and conceal human flesh.
The people inside of the clothes, the bodies
white and young, bodies fat and bulging,
bodies wrinkled and wan, all alike veiled
by fine fabrics, sheltered by walls and
roofs, shut in from the sun and stars.
The souls inside of the bodies—the naked souls;
souls weazened and weak, or proud and
brave; all imprisoned in flesh, wrapped in
woven stuffs, enclosed in thick and painted
masonry, shut away with many shadows
from the shining truth.
God inside of the souls, God veiled and wrapped
and imprisoned and shadowed in fold on
fold of flesh and fabrics and mockeries; but
ever alive, struggling and rising again,
seeking the light, freeing the world.

Harriet Monroe

The Humming-Bird

What a boom! boom!
Sounds among the honeysuckles!
Saying, 'Room! room!
Hold your breath and mind your knuckles!”
And a fairy birdling bright
Flits like a living dart of light,
With his tiny whirlwind wings
Flies and rests and sings.
All his soul one flash, one quiver,
Down each cup
He thrusts his long beak with a shiver,
Drinks the sweetness up;
Takes the best of earth and goes—
Daring sprite!—
Back to his heaven no mortal knows,
A heaven as sweet as the heart of a rose
Shut at night.
Out upon the trackless highway
Now I go,
Beaten road and trail and byway
Far below!
I have shaken from my feet
Mire of earth, dust of the street.
Now the birds' way shall be my way,
Winds of heaven shall be my seat!
Out upon the untrodden highway
Now I go.

Patterned parks and bold skyscrapers
Of the town,
Close-packed houses plumed with vapors,
Dwindle down
In a world that slants and tips.
And the little creeping ships
Skim the sea. And people crawling
In their cage earth-bound, appalling,
Crowd and cross and would be free—
Look at me!

I shall over-ride the mountain
Through the blue,
And the cloud shall be my fountain
Fringed with dew.
Towers and tree-tops swing and sway,
Broidered meadows glide away.
Now I tread the air's own highway,
Now the eagle's way is my way.
I am off to meet the mountain—
Where are you?

Harriet Monroe

The Inner Silence

Noises that strive to tear
Earth's mantle soft of air
And break upon the stillness where it dwells:
The noise of battle and the noise of prayer,
The cooing noise of love that softly tells
Joy's brevity, the brazen noise of laughter—
All these affront me not, nor echo after
Through the long memories.
They may not enter the deep chamber where
Forever silence is.

Silence more soft than spring hides in the ground
Beneath her budding flowers;
Silence more rich than ever was the sound
Of harps through long warm hours,
'Tis like a hidden vastness, even as though
Great suns might there beat out their measures slow
Nor break the hush mightier than they.
There do I dwell eternally,
There where no thought may follow me,
Nor stillest dreams whose pinions plume the way.

Harriet Monroe

The Legend Of A Pass Christian

A Live-oak grows by the shallow sea.
Rest under its boughs, I pray,
And hear of the pirate—bold was he—
And the lady he stole away.

He was a black-browed buccaneer,
And she like a snow-drop white.
From a scuttled ship he bore her clear
As it sunk in the haggard night.

And with bell and book he wedded her.
And shaped her to his will.
Yet though her body could not stir
Her soul escaped him still.

Though we be wed and vows be said,
Though beaten sore I be,
I'm naught of thine, thou'rt naught of mine,
God loose these bonds from me!

On through long days and nights of woe
The black ship held its way.
It faced the iceberg topped with snow,
It scoured the tropic bay.

Through nights and days of wrath and dread
The ship sped darkly on.
Behind it like a trail of red
Its path glared to the sun.

And fiercer rose the skipper's pride,
And black his anger grew,
That he who man and God defied
One soul could not subdue.

Ah, many a pain and many a stain
We women bear for men;
Yet blest is she whose soul is free
Even in the dragon’s den.

And when he knew nor time nor fate
Could bring him his desire,
He held dark converse with his hate
To find a vengeance dire.

And many an oath to hell he cast
While, in the devil's name,
He bound his lady to the mast
And set the ship aflame.

Long hast thou hated me, he cried,
Now laugh aloud in glee!

Though thou shouldst call me o'er the tide,
I come not back to thee.

The sea is deep, and I shall sleep
Softly beneath the wave.
Faith, thou canst kill; now do thy will,
And bless me with a grave.

Swiftly the royal sun dropped down
Deep in his purple bed.
And swiftly, at the skipper's frown,
His oarsmen shoreward sped.

The sudden night fell soft and dark
On lonely sea and shore
Before back at the fated bark
Its captain gazed once more.

I know not if the thing he hailed
From hell or heaven came—
A livid ship that sailless sailed,
Lit up by song and flame.

Far out to sea I flee, I flee—
Oh, heaven is far away!
My days are done under the sun—
Why must I longer stay!

Row fast; row fast; yet shall he hear
Naught but that wailing now.
Yet shall he see, through nights of fear,
That figure at the prow.

Long years, under this live-oak tree,
Naught else he saw and heard.
At last once more he put to sea,
By a strange passion stirred.

The loud storm roared and flashed that night
And never night nor day
Saw the old pirate's shallop white
Drift back across the bay.

Now we, who wait one night a year
Under these branches long,
May see a flaming ship, and hear
The echo of a song.

Harriet Monroe

The Meeting

The ox-team and the automobile
Stood face to face on the long red road,
The long red road was narrow
At the turn of the hill,
And below was the sun-dancing river
Afoam over the rocks.

The mild-mannered beasts stood par, chewing their cud.
The stubble-bearded man from the mountains,
Rustier than his wagon,
Unmoving eyed the proud chauffeur.
The little ragged girl,
With sun-bleached hair,
Sitting on a ahrd, yellow-powdrey bag,
Looked across at the smart motor hats of the ladies,
And their chiffon scarfs
That the light breeze fingered.
The proud chauffeur blew his horn,
But nothing moved-
Except the foaming, sun-dancing river down below.

Then he jerked his head,
And turned the wheel,
And slowly, carefully,
The automobile moved back over the long red road.

And the mild-mannered beasts lifted their feet,
And the stubble-bearded man flipped his rein,
Ad the ragged little girl looked ahead up the hill,
And the ox-team lumbered and limped over the long red road.

Harriet Monroe

The Message Of The Wind

The wind comes riding down from heaven.
Ho! wind of heaven, what do you bring?
Cool for the dawn, dew for the even,
And every sweetest thing.
O wind of heaven, from pink clouds driven,
What do you bring to me?
The low call of thy love who waits
Under the willow tree,
Whose boat upon the water waits
For me, for thee.

Harriet Monroe

The Mockery

Sometimes I laugh—what else can a man do
Who does not know ? This little ego here
Braving the void, this fleck upon the blue,
This filmy wing sounding the starry sphere—
What bold abysmal incongruity,
What joke of the gods to make a mock of me !

I hear you sing, and wonder how you dare.
Too fine for song they are—the tint of the rose,
The touch of a child, love's beauty and despair,
All the sad furtive exquisiteness that blows,
Like scent of gardens I may never see,
Across my sense to make a mock of me.

That I, this atom infinitesimal,
This chance-blown seed of flesh and fire, that I
Should front the dread immensity, the all,
Shocking the silence with my futile cry—
What dark inscrutable absurdity,
What joke of the gods to make a mock of me!

Harriet Monroe

The Model

Have you forgotten—you, the chief,
The art-director, president,
What not, of the establishment—
Forgot how for a moment brief
The whole show, all our strife and stir,
Went out—for her?

You led me through your galleries
And dreams—the pictures new and old
And good and bad, the battles bold
You fought with principalities
And powers. We chaffed and laughed away
Such woes that day!

And built such castles domed and towered
For Art to live in by and by,
When men should know the How and Why;
For Art to live in, throned and dowered,
When the world's works and ways should be
Both fair and free.

From hope to rage and back again
We flashed, flung curses red as bombs
At the dull age, lit hecatombs
Of lies and laws and flaws, and then
Reached for the stars and plucked them down
To make man's crown.

The Truth!—that was our cry—the Truth,
Whose heart and mind, whose lips and eyes,
Her first glance and her last surprise,
Are Beauty. All the while, forsooth,
Bold Chance, the blind interpreter,
Led us—to her.

A school door swung—and she was there !
Strange, how the proud world slunk away
And left her with the waning day
Alone. All vanished unaware—
The class, the great high-windowed hall,
And we, and all.

Yes, all our plans, the futile show
Of art, wherewith rash man aspires
To breathe into the dust life's fires,
And be as God. She stood aglow
Fresh from God's hand. 'Twas all in vain

Our hope, our pain.
God beat us at the game. For her
The dim day flared with rose and gold.
A slim moon softly aureoled,

She shone apart and would not stir,
Hesitant at the rim of space,
Veiling her face.

Out in the dream she rose—afar—
With Eve, new-flowered in paradise;
With Helen, whose effulgent eyes
Men sang to through the crash of war;
With Aphrodite, foam-empearled,
Kindling the world.

The winds of doom grew soft for her,
Nor dared even touch the curls that hid
Her face in dusky gold; nor chid
With change, that recreant pillager,
Her still, immortal loveliness,
So brave to bless.

The place a temple was, and we
So brave to bless.
The place a temple was, and we,
Tricked out with odds and ends of faith—
Mere rags worn thin by life and death—
Profaned the immaculate mystery,
Looked on the truth with blasphemous eyes,
Afraid to rise.

The moment met us and was gone,
The proof of all and the despair.
We sought the dark, growing aware
Of our stript souls; and then anon
Tried all in vain to tread again
The ways of men.

The bold words died upon our lips,
The clatter of our feet grew still.
Even now—ah, does it waft your will
Through ether-seas in winged ships—
The sight of her beyond shut eyes,
The white surprise?

Harriet Monroe

The Night-Blooming Cereus

FLOWER of the moon!
Still white is her brow whom we worshiped on earth long ago;
Yea, purer than pearls in deep seas, and more virgin than snow.
The dull years veil their eyes from her shining, and vanish afraid,
Nor profane her with age—the immortal, nor dim her with shade.

It is we are unworthy, we worldlings, to dwell in her ways;
We have broken her altars and silenced her voices of praise.
She hath hearkened to singing more silvern, seen raptures more bright;
To some planet more pure she hath fled on the wings of the night,—
Flower of the moon!

Yet she loveth the world that forsook her, for, lo! once a year
She, Diana, translucent, pale, scintillant, down from her sphere
Floateth earthward like star-laden music, to bloom in a flower,
And our hearts feel the spell of the goddess once more for an hour.

See! she sitteth in splendor nor knoweth desire nor decay,
And the night is a glory around her more bright than the day,
And her breath hath the sweetness of worlds where no sorrow is known;
And we long as we worship to follow her back to her own,—
Flower of the moon!

Harriet Monroe

The Ocean Liner

They went down to the sea in ships,
In ships they went down to the sea.
In boats hewn of oak-tree strips,
In galleys with skin-sewn sails,
In triremes, caravels, brigs—
Frail, flimsily rolling rigs—
They went down where the huge wave rips,
Where the black storm lashes and hales.
They went down to the sea in ships,
To the sounding, sorrowing sea.

They go down to the sea—O me !—
What ships that outbrave the sea,
What ships that outrun the gale,
With a feather of steam for a sail
And a whirling shaft for an oar,
Are the ships that my brothers build
To carry me over the sea,
That my hand with treasures filled
May knock at the morrow's door !

Steel hulls impenetrable
To the waves that tease and pull,
Bright engines that answer the beat
Of their foam-slippered dancing feet,
Hot fires that shudder and drive,
Close-tended, untiring, sure—
Like queen-bees deep in the hive
Who labor and serve and endure:
All these are down below
Far under the slippery water,
While the babe sleeps soft in his bed,
And the banquet table is spread,
And my neighbor's laughing daughter
Trims her hair with a rose-red bow.

They went down to the sea in ships,
In ships they went down to the sea.
And the sea had a million lips
And she laughed in her throat for glee.
And. the floor of the sea was strewn
With tempest trophies dread,

And the deep-sea currents croon
As they wash through the bones of the dead.
But the ships that my brothers build—
Ah, they mock at the storm's mad rage;
And their burning hearts are thrilled
When he throws them his battle gauge.
On the sea-foam they lean for a pillow,
They drive without paddle or sail
Straight over the mountainous billow,

Straight on through the blustering gale !
Oh they shake out gay flags as they run,
Flags that flutter and gleam in the sun!
From the tip of their turrets above
They send news of the storm to the shore;
And they hear from afar through the roar,
Down the cloud-built aisles of the sky,
Some land-bound lady's cry
To her ocean-wandering love.

They go down to the sea in ships,
In ships they go down to the sea.
And my brothers, the masterful, free,
Fear no more the white foam of her lips,
They have won her, she harks to their wooing,
The love of ten thousand years,
The suing, the wild undoing,
The faith unto death, the tears.
Oh, their glory her song shall be;
Soft, soft is the kiss of her lips!
They go down to the sea in ships,
In ships they go down to the sea.

Harriet Monroe

The Peacemaker

To the world-wanderer Samarkand is near,
The broad Pacific but a narrow strait.
To him old China at the Asian gate
A neighbor is, an elder brother dear.
Toward savage coasts he dares his bark to steer,
Bidding the tempest bear him on in state.
He knocks at tombs where kings their summons wait,
And meets the gods of eld in deserts drear.
So to the traveller who has long explored
Tropics of sickness, rocky wastes of pain,
Or arctic solitudes of icy sorrow—
To him is death no foe remote, abhorred,
But a wise friend, a peacemaker who fain
Would marry loud today with shy tomorrow.

Harriet Monroe

The Pine At Timber-Line

What has bent you,
Warped and twisted you,
Torn and crippled you?
What has embittered you,
O lonely tree?
You search the rocks for a footing,
dragging scrawny roots;
You bare your thin breast to the storms,
and fling out wild arms behind you;
You throw back your witch-like head,
with wisps of hair stringing the wind.
You fight with the snows,
You rail and shriek at the tempests.
Old before your time, you challenge the cold stars.
Be still, be satisfied!
Stand straight like your brothers in the valley,
The soft green valley of summer down below.
Why front the endless winter of the peak?
Why seize the lightning in your riven hands?
Why cut the driven wind and shriek aloud?
Why tarry here?

Harriet Monroe

The Princess And The Page

There is a legend—you have read it—
Of a fair page whom evil spells
Held in deep sleep; and men of credit
Tried all in vain, the story tells,
Week after week, by night and noon,
To wake him from his sombre swoon.

Till one, more knowing than the others,
Took counsel of the stars, and said:
'We may not rouse this youth, my brothers;
But if the queen will bow her head
And kiss him on the lips, his soul
Straight shall escape the fiend's control.'

'Then he must perish !' in loud chorus
The learned men lamenting cried;
'Better to let him die before us
Than see our queen abase her pride
And shame her fame from north to south,
Kissing a page upon the mouth.'

And so in sorrow they departed
And through the travelled highways passed.
But the strange news their story started
Filled all the land, and reached at last
The crowded hall where sate alone
The fair young monarch on her throne.

And she, being royal, rose in beauty
Like dawn over a leafy hill.
'Would you then teach your queen her duty?—
Now lead me forth to do God's will.
Know, were this youth my meanest slave,
He should not die whom I could save.'

So forth they led her through the palace,
Beyond the park and past the gate,
Silent as when a sacred chalice
Uplifts the rich wine consecrate.
In royal pomp of robe and crown
Through field and wood they led her down.

There in a mossy glade lay sleeping
A youth so beautiful, 'tis said,
That the still trees were softly keeping
A solemn vigil round his bed;
And the birds sang sweet lullabies,
Fearing lest he should wake and rise.

Then silken-vestured lords and ladies
Circled him like a garland there,
Thinking, 'Thrice blest our royal maid is

To kiss to life a thing so fair.'
And many a damsel envied her,
Feeling the aching pulses stir.

Simply, divinely, like one praying,
The crowned queen passed their shadowed eyes,
And knelt beside the youth, and saying,
'Now in God's name I bid thee rise,'
She bowed and kissed the parted lips,
Like a white cloud that moonward dips.

And as she rose the pale lids lifted
Over his dark eyes veiled and drowned,
That slowly back to being drifted
And in her gaze their refuge found.
Then slowly, bold with rapture sweet,
He turned and sank before her feet.

'Give me thy love—I love thee only!'—
The bold words fluttered like a song.
'Thy love!' and from her station lonely
The young queen heard and took no wrong,
But lifted one white hand to still
Murmurs that dared rebuke her will.

'Blest is thy love, so freely given,
As all things freely given are blest.
Yea, not in vain thy soul hath striven
Even though I grant not thy behest.
Over the hills, across the sea,
The prince comes who my lord shall be.'

'Over the hills, across the ocean—'
The bowed youth echoed, murmuring:
Then rose, reeling with dark emotion,
And striving to his dream to cling.
'Nay, if thou love me not, ah why
Didst thou not leave me here to die?'

'Now, by my crown, thou art not noble
But basely born,' the queen made moan.
'Do penance for thy words ignoble—
Life is not given for love alone.
Oh, purge thee in Christ's altar-flame,
And go to battle in His name.'

So saying, from the forest hoary
She passed, with all who marvelled there;
Nor once gazed back—so runs the story—
To see him on his knees in prayer.
But all this came to pass, they say,
Long, long ago, and far away.

Harriet Monroe

The River Kern

While I walk the pavement sooty
In the town,
Tread the stony path of duty
Up and down,
Oh, the Kern, all clad in beauty—
Silver sheen
On blue and green—
Down his canon goes cascading,
Cavalcading,
Cannonading,
Seizing all the brooks and fountains
How they beat
Their crystal feet!—
Shouting to the haughty mountains,
Giant peaks that frown !

Oh, my heart runs with the river
Far away,
Though through wintry streets I shiver
Day by day!
Oh, I see the sunshine quiver—
Shafts of light
That pause in flight!—
While the Kern, with white feet prancing,
Downward dancing,
Gaily glancing,
Shakes the massive earth from under—
How he shocks
The solemn rocks!—
Shoves the mighty cliffs asunder,
Bids them guard his play!

Now I hear the horns a-blowing
From the height,
And I see white garments flowing
Sheer and bright!
Down the hills the Kern is going—
Hear him call
His legions all!
Ye intrepid, oh come leaping!
Leave your sleeping
Swords from scabbards—hark, the clamor!
Swift and free
Oh would you be?—
In the glory, in the glamour,
Follow day and night !

Harriet Monroe

The Sage

Sequoia, growing grandly
Out of the long ago,
Beloved of Time, whose sons
March by to measures slow,
How tenderly you cherish
All little lives below!

Your mighty column pillars
The blue dome of the sky.
Your foliage plumes with greenness
The clouds that pass on high.
Yet here below slim lilies grow,
And here at peace am I.

How have you won Time over—
That lord of dark renown?
His hand, that withers all things,
Has given your brow a crown.
From your crest forty centuries
Now upon me look down.

Yes, all the lordly ages
Your youth immortal knows,
Yet softly here you fashion
A carpet for the rose,
And smoothly spread a mossy bed
Under my deep repose.

You have defied the lightnings—
They rent and scarred in vain.
Fierce fires have stripped you naked-
You made your peace with pain,
And bloomed again in beauty
To baffle death's disdain.

Where do you win your secret
Of life untroubled, free,
And wise with all the wisdom
Of time's democracy?
What do you hear this many a year?—
Whisper the song to me !

Harriet Monroe

The Shadow-Child

Why do the wheels go whirring round,
Mother, mother?
Oh, mother, are they giants bound,
And will they growl forever?
Yes, fiery giants underground,
Daughter, little daughter,
Forever turn the wheels around,
And rumble-grumble ever.

Why do I pick the threads all day,
Mother, mother,
While sunshine children are at play?
And must I work forever?
Yes, shadow-child; the live-long day,
Daughter, little daughter,
Your hands must pick the threads away,
And feel the sunshine never.

Why do the birds sing in the sun,
Mother, mother,
If all day long I run and run,
Run with the wheels forever?
The birds may sing till day is done,
Daughter, little daughter,
But with the- wheels your feet must run—
Run with the wheels forever.

Why do I feel so tired each night,
Mother, mother?
The wheels are always buzzing bright;
Do they grow sleepy never?
Oh, baby thing, so soft and white,
Daughter, little daughter,
The big wheels grind us in their might,
And they will grind forever.

And is the white thread never spun,
Mother, mother?
And is the white cloth never done,
For you and me done never?
Oh yes, our thread will all be spun,
Daughter, little daughter,
When we lie down out in the sun,
And work no more forever.

And when will come that happy day,
Mother, mother?
Oh, shall we laugh and sing and play
Out in the sun forever?
Nay, shadow-child, we'll rest all day,
Daughter, little daughter,
Where green grass grows and roses gay,

There in the sun forever.

Harriet Monroe

The Telephone

Your voice, beloved, on the living wire,
Borne to me by the spirit powerful
Who binds the atoms and leaps out to pull
Great suns together! Ah, what magic lyre,
Strung for God's fingers, sounds to my desire
The little words immortal, wonderful,
That all the separating miles annul
And touch my spirit with your kiss of fire!
What house of dreams do we inhabit—yea,
What brave enchanted palace is our home,
Green-curtained, lit with cresset stars aglow,
If thus it windows gardens far away,
Groves inaccessible whence voices come
That soft in the ear call where we may not go!

Harriet Monroe

The Temple Of Vishnu

Grand Cañon of Arizona

Vishnu, the gods of eld are dead. Long dead
Are Zeus, Astarte, and that lotus-flower,
Isis of Egypt. Unto each his hour.
Yet thou, silent within thy temple dread,
Locked against prayers, mounted above the tread
Of climbing feet, thou from thy purple tower
Contemplatest the stern inscrutable power
Whence all things come and whither all are led.
The day in splendor of lilac and clear blue
Visits thy mighty seat. The sapphire night
Broods in the abyss with darkness, and the rain
Veils thee with clouds, hails thee and bids adieu
In thunder. Steadfast on thy terraced height
Thou seest bold time besiege thy throne in vain.

Harriet Monroe

The Thief On The Cross

Three crosses rose on Calvary against the iron sky,
Each with its living burden, each with its human cry.
And all the ages watched there, and there were you and I.
One bore the God incarnate, reviled by man's disdain,
Who through the woe he suffered for our eternal gain
With joy of infinite loving assuaged his infinite pain.
On one the thief repentant conquered his cruel doom,
Who called at last on Christ and saw his glory through the gloom.
For him after the torment souls of the blest made room.

And one the unrepentant bore, who his harsh fate defied.
To him, the child of darkness, all mercy was denied;
Nailed by his brothers on the cross, he cursed his God and died.
Ah, Christ, who met in Paradise him who had eyes to see,
Didst thou not greet the other in hell's black agony ?
And if he knew thy face, Lord, what did he say to thee?

Harriet Monroe

The Tower

He built a tower for all to see,
With sun-washed gardens planted wide.
And there with pomp of pageantry,
With men-at-arms and minstrelsy
And moonbeam ladies fair and free,
He revelled in his pride.
And there, with soft prayers muttered slow,
And wind-blown candles burning low,
And hooded mourners row on row,
In pomp of peace he died.

Now time forgets how many a sun
Above the waste has risen and run
Since all the feasts were over and done;
Yet still from rusty pinnacle,
From cobwebbed pane and broken bell,
A wind-voice murmurs: Here am I—
'Twas good to live and die;
And good to rear these carved stones well
'Twixt laboring earth and dreaming sky.
And now 'tis good to watch and wait
While the slow centuries pass in state,
And make old time my glory tell
To you who wander by.

Harriet Monroe

The Turbine

To W. S. M.

Look at her—there she sits upon her throne
As ladylike and quiet as a nun!
But if you cross her—whew! her thunderbolts
Will shake the earth! She's proud as any queen,
The beauty—knows her royal business too,
To light the world, and does it night by night
When her gay lord, the sun, gives up his job.
I am her slave; I wake and watch and run
From dark till dawn beside her. All the while
She hums there softly, purring with delight
Because men bring the riches of the earth
To feed her hungry fires. I do her will
And dare not disobey, for her right hand
Is power, her left is terror, and her anger
Is havoc. Look—if I but lay a wire
Across the terminals of yonder switch
She'll burst her windings, rip her casings off,
And shriek till envious Hell shoots up its flames,
Shattering her very throne. And all her people,
The laboring, trampling, dreaming crowds out there—
Fools and the wise who look to her for light—
Will walk in darkness through the liquid night, Submerged.

Sometimes I wonder why she stoops
To be my friend—oh yes, who talks to me
And sings away my loneliness; my friend,
Though I am trivial and she sublime.
Hard-hearted?—No, tender and pitiful,
As all the great are. Every arrogant grief
She comforts quietly, and all my joys
Dance to her measures through the tolerant night.
She talks to me, tells me her troubles too,
Just as I tell her mine. Perhaps she feels
An ache deep down—that agonizing stab
Of grit grating her bearings; then her voice
Changes its tune, it wails and calls to me
To soothe her anguish, and I run, her slave,
Probe like a surgeon and relieve the pain.

We have our jokes too, little mockeries
That no one else in all the swarming world
Would see the point of. She will laugh at me
To show her power: maybe her carbon packings
Leak steam, and I run madly back and forth
To keep the infernal fiends from breaking loose:
Suddenly she will throttle them herself
And chuckle softly, far above me there,
At my alarms.

But there are moments—hush!—
When my turn comes; her slave can be her master,
Conquering her he serves. For she's a woman,
Gets bored there on her throne, tired of herself,
Tingles with power that turns to wantonness.
Suddenly something's wrong—she laughs at me,
Bedevils the frail wires with some mad caress
That thrills blind space, calls down ten thousand
To ruin her pomp and set her spirit free.
Then with this puny hand, swift as her threat,
Must I beat back the chaos, hold in leash
Destructive furies, rescue her—even her—
From the fierce rashness of her truant mood,
And make me lord of far and near a moment,
Startling the mystery. Last night I did it—
Alone here with my hand upon her heart
I faced the mounting fiends and whipped them down;
And never a wink from the long file of lamps
Betrayed her to the world.

So there she sits,
Mounted on all the ages, at the peak
Of time. The first man dreamed of light, and dug
The sodden ignorance away, and cursed
The darkness; young primeval races dragged
Foundation stones, and piled into the void
Rage and desire; the Greek mounted and sang
Promethean songs and lit a signal fire;
The Roman bent his iron will to forge
Deep furnaces; slow epochs riveted
With hope the secret chambers: till at last
We, you and I, this living age of ours,
A new-winged Mercury, out of the skies
Filch the wild spirit of light, and chain him there
To do her will forever.

Look, my friend,
Behold a sign! What is this crystal sphere—
This little bulb of glass I lightly lift,
This iridescent bubble a child might blow
Out of its brazen pipe to hold the sun—
What strange toy is it? In my hand it lies
Cold and inert, its puny artery—
That curling cobweb film—ashen and dead.
But see—a twist or two—let it but touch
The hem, far trailing, of my lady's robe,
And lo, the burning life-blood of the stars
Leaps to its heart, that glows against the dark,
Kindling the world.

Even so I touch her garment,
Her servant through the quiet night; and thus

And feel their throb of fire. Grandly she gives
To me unworthy; woman inscrutable,
Scatters her splendors through my darkness, leads me
Far out into the workshop of the worlds.
There I can feel those infinite energies
Our little earth just gnaws at through the ether,
And see the light our sunshine hides. Out there
Close to the heart of life I am at peace.

Harriet Monroe

The Water Ouzel

Little brown surf-bather of the mountains!
Spirit of foam, lover of cataracts, shaking your wings in falling waters!
Have you no fear of the roar and rush when Nevada plunges --
Nevada, the shapely dancer, feeling her way with slim white fingers?
How dare you dash at Yosemite the mighty --
Tall, white limbed Yosemite, leaping down, down over the cliff?
Is it not enough to lean on the blue air of mountains?
Is it not enough to rest with your mate at timberline, in bushes that hug
the rocks?
Must you fly through mad waters where the heaped-up granite breaks them?
Must you batter your wings in the torrent?
Must you plunge for life and death through the foam?

Harriet Monroe

The Woman

Go sleep, my sweetie—rest—rest!
Oh soft little hand on mother's breast!
Oh soft little lips—the din's mos' gone-
Over and done, my dearie one!

What do I think, my brother? Look at me!
You make me laugh, sitting there solemneyed,
Full of opinions, theories!—asking me—
Look—with my baby at my breast—to tell you,
Blessed big uncle!—what I think—heaven help me!—
Of this and that. How could you think, I wonder,
If baby lips were tugging at your flesh,
Draining your life to flower the world?
Dear brother,
It's beautiful, that masculine pride of yours,
That runs the universe—oh yes, I know,
And longs to run it well. You travel, observe,
Experiment, make laws and governments,
Build strange machines and masterfully summon
The elemental powers to do your work—
Why?—so my girl here, darling hope of the race,
May pillow her round head in a softer bed,
And dance more lightly by and by—God bless her—.
Into her lover's arms.

Ah precious!—hungry still, my bird?
Coo, coo—yes, darling, mother heard.
Coo, coo—and is it true?—
Ever so true?

What do I think?
If I were arrogant, extravagant—
As men have never been!—what would I think,
Now in this hour of pride, with all the future
Safe in my arms? Almost I might dare whisper
That it's a woman's world—do they not say it
In the great book of science, the new song,
Epic of truth? Let me but hear the word
In reverence—almost a woman's world!
We hold the race within us, we enfold
Life in our arms, we do great nature's work;
So nature hoards and wastes for us, they say,
Contrives our essence from her richer store,
And makes the haughty male out of the rest—
You among others, with your politics,
Your grand reforms, your dreams ! Hush ! do you dare
Follow from seedling sea-drift up to man
Life's long procession, noting everywhere
How the encompassing mother mothers us,
And leaves your kind to shiver and drone and die?
Or else, in pity, the less vital tasks
She gives you—bids you serve us, fight for us,

Even sing for us; and cunningly contrive
Is heavy with strange erections, and the air
Is noisy with ideas.

Oh yes, I know—
You've got the upper hand, you run the world,
Think so at least; at many an icy hearth
You do your will with us; and we—poor chattels—
Meekly we take our fortune at your hands,
With never a royal word to prove us women,
Not slaves. Why do we yield, abase ourselves,
If we are nature's favorites, till even
The mighty mother who made us in her image
Rejects us, winnows her worthless chaff away:
Poor drudges, eating the heart of the race for bread;
Poor puppets, wilfully idle, wilfully barren,
Teasers of men—riff-raff and refuse all!

Why should we suffer this in a woman's world?
Good God, I wonder sometimes, hang my head
For our surrender. Ah, we clasp too close

The burden on our hearts, nor look abroad
Through our long windy night of passion and pain.
And still at dawn we rub our sleepy eyes,
Here at the hearth with morning in our arms—
Pink-dimpled baby morning, look at her!—
Waiting for you, our powerful delegates,
To chase the night away.

But is it strange?
Think but a moment, ask yourself, my brother—
You who tell me to think—what is our life,
Our woman's life? Out of delicious youth,
Murmurous, odorous, vague, full of delights
Half won, half apprehended, suddenly,
Like a still stream seized by the ruthless ocean,
We are drawn to the deeps. Love, marriage, motherhood—
We are drowned in the physical, sensual; washed over
With tide on tide of feeling warm and red—
The heart's-blood of the world. Little pitiless
Grip us within, throttle us, hold us down
Through the long moons of feebleness and pain.
Little souls adrift, gathering out of the void;
Bring us their nebulous dreams, vague, incoherent,
Far lightning-flashes caught from flaming stars.
No longer free, no more our own, or yours,
No longer of this world, but of all worlds,
We are borne by the vast tide, the tide of storms,
Life irresistible, universal, deep,
Out of that no-man's-land, that isle of pain,
Where birth and death fight in the dark together

For the new soul, the new little infant world, ,
Bearer of tidings, saviour of the race—
The child.

Then, wonder of wonders, comes
The change. All glowing, from his great white throne
God stoops to us; we see the splendor, we hear
The thronging harps, we feel here in our arms
His presence forming softly, clasping close
Into a little tender human thing—
Our own, ours, ours. Then suddenly for a moment
We are swept away by joy magnificent,
And from high heaven watch the brave world go by.

Read the old story—it's our Bethlehem.
We couch in a manger, bring forth young like beasts
In blood and shame and agony, and then
Rise with the living God safe in our arms.
Well, after that what are your grand affairs,
Your brave ideas, your dreams? We scarcely heed
Your world-building, we leave you to your work,
Praising your strength, your imperious leadership,
Your craft that skims the sea and wings the
And sends love-words all round the girdled world
Before these blue eyes, almost locked in sleep,
Open to make the dawn. Oh wonderful
Your power and cunning! Should we envy you
The triumph, the high renown, when in our arms
We hold all life—even you, the doer, the present,
And this, the ultimate future of our dreams?

Look—she's asleep. Isn't she a drop of dew
Mirroring moonlight? Or a velvet petal
Dropped from the almond tree all pearly pink
That grows in Sahuaro Valley? Or a spring,
Cool, still, where all the birds of the air shall drink
Before it flows through the wide fields of the world,
The thick dark woods, to wander who knows where,
Love-led, love-nourished? Oh, be wise for her,
My brother! Smooth her flowery-scented ways—
We give you this to do.

But if you falter,
If, blinded by the dust and smothered in spoils,
You strive for trophies and forget the goal,
Must I not rise out of my sheltered seat
At last? When I can empty my arms of her,
Turn from the happy garden where I dwell
And look over the world, what do I see
Under the cloud-capped towers and pinnacles?
Cities I see where little children drudge
The strength of the race away; gaunt factories

Where girls and boys are withered at the loom,
The wheel, the furnace; festering tenements
Where babies—tiny tender things like mine—
Are born in filth and darkness, to endure
Starved little wretched lives, or die like rats
While their pale mothers earn a pitiful dole
By day and night in the one huddled room.
In sulphurous mines, in roaring steam-driven mills
Where human hearts are broken on the
wheel; In jails where law wreaks a self-righteous vengeance
On the less masterful crimes; in gaudy brothels,
Where daughters of the race—yes, mine and yours,
Once dewy in their mothers' arms like this—
Rot into slaves of lust; in all dark places,
Unaware of love, unvisited of the sun,
I count the agonies of our lorded world.
I see that delicate lovely thing called life—
My charge, my woman's business, God forgive me!—
Crushed into clay, mortared with blood and tears,
For modern civilization, huge sky-scraper,
To tower its many-windowed stories on.
And through those glaring windows I behold
A riot of waste, a sickening glut, an orgy—
Life turned once more to loathing and despair.
So, though I bear my baby in my arms,
Now must I tread the crowded ways of the world.
Help me to rise, give me your powerful hand,
My brother; lead me forth to do my part,
Too long content to rest here in my garden
Love-sheltered. Mea culpa—I have sinned.
Vast is the world, our steel-blown, power-driven world;
Too huge a grand machine for half the race
To build, and run, and guard from rust and filth,
While we, the other half, cling to the hearth,
Selfishly guard our own, and give no aid
Through the long heat and burden of the day.
Now we are summoned, for the hour is struck.
We have over-strained your strength, we have over-trusted
Your zeal. Now must we take our burden back—
The burden of life you bear but fitfully—
And nourish on warm breasts the suffering

Come, curly pearly one, my bird,
My primrose folding up at night/
Sleep warm and tight!
Never a word
Till it is light!
Softly, softly, down in your bed,
Round little toes to round little head,
Sleep, sleep, my weary one,
Mother's dearie one!

Harriet Monroe

The Wonder Of It

How wild, how witch-like weird that life should be!
That the insensate rock dared dream of me,
And take to bursting out and burgeoning—
Oh, long ago—yo ho!—
And wearing green! How stark and strange a thing
That life should be!

Oh mystic mad, a rigadoon of glee,
That dust should rise, and leap alive, and flee
Afoot, awing, and shake the deeps with cries—
Oh, far away—yo hay!
What moony masque, what arrogant disguise
That life should be!

Harriet Monroe

Titanic Requiem

Sleep softly in your ocean bed,
You who could grandly die !
Our fathers, who at Shiloh bled,
Accept your company.

O sons of warriors, lightly rest,
Daughters of pioneers!
Heroes freeborn, who chose the best,
No tears for you, but cheers!

Lovers of life, who life could give,
Sleep softly where you lie!
Ours be the vigil—help us live,
Who teach us how to die.

Harriet Monroe

To Idleness

Sweet Idleness, you linger at the door
To lead me down through meadows cool with shade—
Down to the brook, over whose pebbly floor
The fishes, unafraid,
Swim softly, careless of our airy world.
I hear you ever singing, calling ever,
Bidding me sever
The chain so close about my spirit curled.
Why do I toil and pore
When you are at the door?
Surely Time's slave am I, and you will shun me;
Surely the delvers of the dark have won me
If here I stay when you are fled away.

O Idleness, where sleep your votaries ?
In what enchanted garden of pure bliss
Float their dim dreams on lotus-laden wings?
What joy of musical imaginings
Lulls them in banishment?
Ah, call them back to earth, that weary is!
Ah, call them back, with sleepy-eyed Content
Close in their flowery train,
And bid them soothe a world whose joys are spent,
Who prays for peace in vain !
Tell them to twine their wreaths round yonder brow,
Whence lovely hopes flamed skyward once, where now
Greed showers his ashes gray.
Bedew those eyes until they shine once more;
For exiled youth unbar the rusted door,
And save a soul to-day.

Oh, will you linger with the butterflies,
And man's high love despise?
I know one fit for your sweet wooing—
Ah, save him from the beckoning death!
Too swiftly Beauty's quest pursuing,
Soon must he fall, and fail of breath.
The dull world speeds him on—oh, haste!
With roses bind him, bear him far,
Sing him sweet songs, weave visions chaste,
Till he is strong to seek his star!

Ah, we have sinned and grievous is our shame !
You we have banished, and reviled your name,
Till men dig deep in shadows, rubbing o'er
Their earthy store;
And maids pink-petalled like the morn,
For you and love and dalliance born,
Toil clamorous in the dark, and smile no more.
Do you hear the noise? Ah, no! for you are flown.
Now you will follow
The flight of song through fields with daisies sown.

The sport of thrush and swallow
Rhymes with your joy, and I must brood alone.

Harriet Monroe

Two Capitals—1910

Moscow
White Moscow of the pearly towers,
And golden domes for praise,
And chiming hours!
Red Moscow of the Kremlin walls,
And bloody battle ways,
And fire-scarred halls!

Beautiful Moscow brave and bright,
Whose banners floated toward the light
When Asia knocked at Europe's door
And bleeding tzars paid off our score—
Ah, shining city, far away
Your gaudy spires salute the day
Like opal-hearted iris flowers
Decking the blue transparent hours.
Now from your seat the slim rails run
Through Asia to the rising sun,
Along the ancient highway made
By caravan and cavalcade.
Still East and West meet at your gate—
That Kremlin gate where once in state
Great Europe's conqueror, seeking room,
Marched through triumphant to his doom.
Proud Moscow of barbaric tzars,
Of gorgeous crownings and dark wars,
Jewel-encrusted, rich with age,
Heir of a lordly heritage,
Look out from Ivan's tower of bells—
See, the vast East is proud with day!
Soon to your ancient citadels
The world will march the Asian way.

White Moscow of the pearly towers.
And golden domes for praise
And chiming hours!
Red Moscow of the Kremlin walls,
And bloody battle ways
And fire-scarred halls!

Peking
Under her yellow roofs adream
The imperial city sleeps in state,
While warrior nations, flags agleam,
Come marching through her fortress gate.
Beneath her towered wall, one by one,
The slow contemptuous camels tread,
And through it eager engines run
Over the dust of ages dead.
Peking! close bound in triple walls,
Between the old and new she lies;
The yellow dragon guards her halls,

The blare of trumpets fills her skies.
She stirs out of her age-long sleep
By the worn temples chill and still,
Where Sung and Ming and Mongol keep
Their ghostly watch from hill to hill.
Over the graves of dynasties
The winds of dawn blow free and far—
Heralds of hastening centuries,
With banners flown for peace or war.

O brooding East!
O winds of dawn!
From the night-long feast
The kings are gone.
What guests will come
Down the world's highway
At the roil of the drum
For the day?

Harriet Monroe

Washington

Oh, hero of our younger race!
Great builder of a temple new!
Ruler, who sought no lordly place!
Warrior who sheathed the sword he drew!

Lover of men, who saw afar
A world unmarred by want or war,
Who knew the path, and yet forbore
To tread, till all men should implore;
Who saw the light, and led the way
Where the gray world might greet the day;

Father and leader, prophet sure,
Whose will in vast works shall endure,
How shall we praise him on this day of days,
Great son of fame who has no need of praise?

How shall we praise him? Open wide the -
Of heroes moves o’er unresounding floors
Men whose brawned arms upraised these colors high
And reared the towers that vanish in the sky,-
The strong who, having wrought, can never, never die.

Harriet Monroe

Why Not?

Poet, sing me a song to-day !
But the world grows old and my hair is gray.

Ah no! there are birds on the lilac bushes
And a snow-drop out of the wet earth pushes.
Two chattering robins are planning a marriage,
And see! there's a baby all pink in its carriage!
And the sun is wiping the clouds from his brow,
And who can look back when it's always now?
Oh, what is the use of a poet, say,
If he will not sing me a song to-day?

Harriet Monroe

Wings

Pearl-gray is the sky,
And high within it, sailing by,
Three sea-gulls fly.

Pearl-white are they
Against the sky's obscurer gray—
Sea-foam astray.

Gulls, sea-gulls white,
Drift of the day, drift of the night,
Mine be your flight!

Out—out, with you
Beyond the noise, into the blue!
Ah—if I knew!

Harriet Monroe

Winter

Earth bears her sorrow gladly, like a nun,
Her young face glowing through the icy veil.
The storms that threaten her, the winds that rail,
Kindle a deeper color. She has won
Graces that please the high-enthronèd sun;
Across her soft white robes that drift and trail
He casts his lordly purples, lest she quail
With the dead year, and think that all is done.
She leadeth on through desolate sad days,
A smile upon her lips, a triumph-song
Shut in her heart. Be glad! so singeth she;
Glad of the solitude, the silent ways,—
Even of the pain; so shall thy soul grow strong
For the brave spring that comes to set us free.

Harriet Monroe