Classic Poetry Series

Harry Crosby

- 37 poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Harry Crosby (4, June 1898–10 December 1929)

Harry Crosby was an American heir, a bon vivant, poet, publisher, and for some, epitomized the Lost Generation in American literature. He was the son of one of the richest banking families in New England, a member of the Boston Brahmin, and the nephew of Jane Norton Grew, the wife of financier J. P. Morgan, Jr.. As such, he was heir to a portion of a substantial family fortune. He was a volunteer in the American Field Service during World War I, and later served in the U.S. Ambulance Corps. He narrowly escaped with his life.

Profoundly affected by his experience in World War I, Crosby vowed to live life on his own terms and abandoned all pretense of living the expected life of a privileged Bostonian. He had his father's eye for women, and in 1920 met Mrs. Richard Peabody (née Mary Phelps Jacob), six years his senior. They had sex within two weeks, and their open affair was the source of scandal and gossip among blue-blood Boston.

Mary (or Polly as she was called) divorced her alcoholic husband and to her family's dismay married Crosby. Two days later they left for Europe, where they devoted themselves to art and poetry. Both enjoyed a decadent lifestyle, drinking, smoking opium regularly, traveling frequently, and having an open marriage. Crosby maintained a coterie of young ladies that he frequently bedded, and wrote and published poetry that dwelled on the symbolism of the sun and explored themes of death and suicide.

Crosby's life in Paris was at the crossroads of early 20th century Paris literary and cultural life. He numbered among his friends some of the most famous individuals of the early 20th century, including Salvador Dalí, Ernest Hemingway, and Henri Cartier-Bresson. In 1927 Polly took the name Caresse, and she and Harry founded the Black Sun Press. It was the first to publish works by a number of struggling authors who later became famous, including James Joyce, Kay Boyle, Ernest Hemingway, Hart Crane, D. H. Lawrence, René Crevel, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound. Crosby died scandalously at age 31 as part of a murder–suicide or suicide pact.

Early life

Harry Crosby was born as Henry Sturgis Crosby (his parents Stephen Van Rensslaer Crosby and Henrietta Marion Grew later changed his middle name to "Grew") in Boston's exclusive Back Bay neighborhood. He was the product of generations of blue-blood Americans, descended from the Van Rensselaers, Morgans, and Grews. His father's mother was the great-granddaughter of Alexander Hamilton. Also among Harry's ancestors were Revolutionary War General Philip Schuyler and William Floyd, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

He had one sibling, a sister, Katherine Schuyler Crosby, nicknamed Kitsa, who was born in 1901. They moved shortly after his birth to a home with a dance floor that could accommodate 150 people. His parents instilled in him a love for poetry. He would toss water bombs off the upper stories of the house onto unsuspecting guests. The family spent its summers on the North Shore of Massachusetts at a second home in Manchester, about 25 miles (40 km) from Boston.

As a child, he attended the exclusive Noble and Greenough School. In 1913, when he was 14 years old, his parents decided it was time to send him to St. Mark’s School, which he graduated from in 1917.

World War I

Crosby tired of the rigidity of everyday life in Boston. He said he wanted to escape "the horrors of Boston and particularly of Boston virgins." Like many young men of upper-crust American society, he volunteered to serve in World War I with the American Field Service in France. A number of writers whose works he would later publish also served in the ambulance corps, including Ernest Hemingway, Malcolm Cowley, and Hart Crane.

When America officially entered the War, the American Field Service ambulance corp was integrated into the U. S. Army Ambulance Corps and Harry enlisted. During the Battle of Verdun he was a driver in the dangerous ambulance service. On November 22, 1917, as Crosby transported several wounded soldiers, including his best friend, Way "Spud" Spaulding, to a medical aid station, his ambulance was hit by an artillery shell that landed 10 feet (3.0 m) away, sending shrapnel ripping through his ambulance. Miraculously, Crosby was unhurt, and was able to save Spud's life. Harry declared later that that was the night he changed from a boy to a man. From that moment on he never feared death.

During a battle near Orme, his section (Section Sanitaire 641, attached to the 120th French Division) carried more than 2000 wounded and was cited for bravery in the field. Crosby became in 1919 one of the youngest Americans to be awarded the Croix de guerre.

Meets Mrs. Richard Peabody

After returning from World War I, Harry attended Harvard under an accelerated program for veterans. Harry's mother invited Mrs. Richard Rogers Peabody (née Mary Phelps Jacob) to chaperone Harry and some of his friends at a picnic on July 4, 1920, including dinner and a trip to the amusement park at Nantasket Beach. During dinner, Harry never spoke to the girl on his left, breaking decorum. By some accounts, Harry fell in love with the buxom Mrs. Peabody in about two hours, confessing his love for her in the Tunnel of Love at the amusement park. Two weeks later they went to church together in Manchester-by-the-Sea and spent the night together. Their public relationship was the gossip of blue-blood Boston.

She was 28, six years older than Harry, with two small children, and married. No matter what Harry tried, Polly would not divorce Richard and marry him. Harry took a job in Boston at the Shawmut National Bank, a job he disliked, and took the train to visit Polly in New York. In May 1921, when Polly would not respond to his demands, Harry threatened suicide if Polly did not marry him. Polly's husband Richard Peabody was in and out of sanitariums several times fighting alcoholism. In June 1921, she formally separated from him. Later that winter, Polly accepted weekend visits from Harry, who would take

the midnight train home to Boston afterward. In December, Polly's husband Richard offered to divorce her, and in February 1922, the marriage was legally ended.

After eight months at the Shawmut National Bank, Harry got drunk for six days and resigned on March 14, 1922. Polly intervened with Harry's uncle, J. P. Morgan, Jr., who agreed to provide a position for Harry in Paris at Morgan, Harjes et Cie. Harry already spoke and read fluent French and moved to Paris in May. Polly preceded him there but in July, angry and jealous, returned to the United States.On September 2, 1922, Harry proposed to Polly via transatlantic cable, and the next day bribed his way aboard the Aquitania for New York which made a weekly six-day express run to New York.

Polly and Harry marry

On September 9, 1922 Harry and Polly were married in the Municipal Building in New York City, and two days later they re-boarded the RMS Aquitania and moved with her children to Paris, France. There they joined the Lost Generation of expatriate Americans disillusioned by the loss of life in World War I and the moral and social values of their parents' generation. Harry continued his work at Morgan, Harjes et Cie, the Morgan family's bank in Paris. They found an apartment overlooking the Seine, at the Quai d'Orléans on the Île Saint-Louis, and Polly would don her red bathing suit and row Harry down the Quai d'Orléans in his dark business suit, formal hat, umbrella and briefcase to the Place de la Concorde where he would walk the last few blocks to the bank on Place Vendôme. As she rowed back home, Polly, who was well endowed, would enjoy whistles, jeers and waves from workmen. She said the exercise was good for her breasts.

Harry barely tolerated Polly's children. After their first year in Paris, her eight-year-old son Billy was shipped off to Le Rosay, an elite boarding school in Gstaad. At the end of 1923, Harry quit Morgan, Harjes et Cie and devoted himself to the life of a poet, and later, publisher. Polly would attempt to create a family Christmas each year, if only in a hotel, but Harry regularly boycotted these events, making it clear that he would be looking for flirtations instead.

Life as expatriates

Both of them were attracted to the bohemian lifestyle of the artists gathering in Montparnasse. Even by the wild standards of Paris in the 1920s, Harry was in a league of his own. The couple lived a hedonistic and decadent life, including an open marriage and numerous affairs.Harry was a gambler and a womanizer; he drank "oceans of champagne" and used opium, cocaine, and hashish.They wrote a mutual suicide pact, and carried cremation instructions with them.

His inheritance, multiplied by the favorable exchange rate the American dollar enjoyed in postwar Europe, allowed them to indulge in an extravagant expatriate lifestyle. Harry's trust fund provided them with US$12,000 a year (or $162,419 in today's dollars). Still, Harry repeatedly overdrew his account at State Street Trust in Boston and at Morgan, Harjes, in Paris, which in blue-blood Boston was like writing graffiti on the front door of a church. Harry wired to his father several times asking him to put more money from his inheritance into his account. In January 1929, he told him "to sell $4,000 worth of stock to make up for past extravagances in New York". In May, he sold another $4000 worth "to enjoy life when you can". In 1929, Harry sent a drunken cable home to his father, an investment banker, who was not pleased by it

PLEASE SELL $10,000 WORTH OF STOCK. WE HAVE DECIDED TO LIVE A MAD AND EXTRAVAGANT LIFE

His father complied but not without rebuking his son for his spendthrift ways.

Polly and Harry purchased their first race horse in June 1924, and then two

more in April 1925. At the end of 1924, Harry persuaded Polly to formally change her first name to Caresse, as he felt Polly was too prim and proper for his wife. They briefly considered Clytoris before deciding on Caresse. Harry suggesting that her new name "begin with a C to go with Crosby and it must form a cross with mine." The two names intersected at right angles at the common "R," "the Crosby cross."

In 1924, they rented an apartment in the Faubourg St. Germain for six months from Princess Marthe Bibesco, a friend of Harry's cousin Walter Berry, for fifty thousand francs (the equivalent of $2,200, about $29,835 in today's dollars. When they moved in, they brought with them "two maids and a cook, a governess, and a chauffeur."

Lifestyle

Harry and Polly rented a fashionable apartment on 19, Rue de Lille on November 19. They became known for hosting small dinner parties from their giant bed in their palatial townhouse on Quai d'Orsay, and afterward everyone was invited to enjoy their huge bathtub together, taking advantage of iced bottles of champagne near at hand.

They took extended traveling tours. In January 1925 they traveled to North Africa where they first smoked opium, a habit to which they would return again and again. Harry had tattoos on the soles of his feet—a cross on one and a pagan sun symbol on the other.

Harry developed an obsessive fascination with imagery centering on the sun. Harry's poetry and journals often focused on the sun, a symbol to him of perfection, enthusiasm, freedom, heat, and destruction. Crosby claimed to be a "sun worshiper in love with death." He often added a doodle of a "black sun" to his signature which also included an arrow, jutting upward from the "y" in Crosby’s last name and aiming toward the center of the sun’s circle: "a phallic thrust received by a welcoming erogenous zone."

Crosby met Ernest Hemingway on a skiing trip to Gstaad in 1926. In July 1927 Crosby and Hemingway visited Pamplona for the running of the bulls. Crosby wrote of Hemingway that "H. could drink us under the table." Harry and Caresse published the Paris edition of Hemingway's The Torrents of Spring.

In early 1928 they traveled to the Middle East, visiting a number of countries. Later in the year they secured a 20 year lease on a medieval mill outside of Paris in Ermenonville, France, for living quarters, which they named "Le Moulin du Soleil" ("The Mill of the Sun"). There they hosted wild parties, including drunken polo on donkeys, and entertained famous guests like Salvador Dalí. He would spend hours sunbathing naked atop the mill's turret. Contrary to fashion of the day, Harry would not wear a hat. He often wore a black carnation in his lapel, and was known to color his finger- and toenails.Harry once hired four horse-drawn carriages and raced them through the Paris streets. He would frequently drop in at Drosso where he would smoke opium. He would stay away from home for days.

Harry experimented with photography and saw the medium as a viable art form before it was widely accepted as such. In 1929, Crosby met Henri Cartier-Bresson at Le Bourget, where Cartier-Bresson's air squadron commandant had placed him under house arrest for hunting without a license. Crosby persuaded the officer to release Cartier-Bresson into his custody for a few days. They found they both had an interest in photography, and they spent their time together taking and printing pictures at Crosby's home, Le Moulin du Soleil.

Harry also learned to fly solo in November, 1929 when the aeroplane was so new that its spelling had not been agreed upon.

Extra-marital relationships

In 1923, shortly after their arrival in Paris, Caresse introduced Harry to her

friend Constance Coolidge, also a member of the Boston Brahmin, an American expatriate and French countess, with whom he immediately began an open sexual relationship. In Morocco during one of their trips to North Africa, Harry and Caresse took a 13-year-old dancing girl named Zora to bed with them. His seductive abilities became legendary in some social circles in Paris, and he engaged in a series of ongoing affairs, maintaining relationships with a variety of beautiful and doting young women.

In July 1925, he met a fourteen-year-old girl named "Nubile." He slept with a 13-year-old Berber girl in North Africa and a young Arab boy in Jerusalem. His wildness was in full flower during the drunken orgies of the annual Four Arts Balls (Bal des Quatz' Arts). One year, Caresse showed up topless riding a baby elephant and wearing a turquoise wig. The motif for the ball that year was Inca, and Harry dressed for the occasion, covering himself in red ocher and wearing nothing but a loincloth and a necklace of dead pigeons.

Embracing the open sexuality offered by Crosby and his wife Caresse, Henri Cartier-Bresson fell into an intense sexual relationship with her that lasted until 1931.

Black Sun Press

In April, 1927, they founded an English language publishing company, first called Éditions Narcisse, after their black whippet, Narcisse Noir. They used the press as an avenue to publish their own poetry in small editions of finely made, hard-bound volumes.

They printed limited quantities of meticulously produced, hand-manufactured books, printed on high-quality paper. Publishing in Paris during the 1920s and 1930s put the company at the crossroads of many American writers who were living abroad. In 1928, as Éditions Narcisse, they printed a limited edition of 300 numbered copies of "The Fall of the House of Usher" by Edgar Allan Poe with illustrations by Alastair.

In 1928, they found they enjoyed the reception their initial works received, and decided to expand the press to serve other authors, renaming the company the Black Sun Press, following on Harry's obsession on the symbolism of the sun. The press rapidly gained notice for publishing beautifully bound, typographically flawless editions of unusual books. They took exquisite care with the books they published, choosing the finest papers and inks.

They published early works of a number of writers before they were well known, including James Joyce's Tales Told of Shem and Shaun (which was later integrated into Finnegans Wake. They published Kay Boyle's first book-length work, Short Stores, in 1929. and works by Hart Crane, D. H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, Archibald MacLeish, Ernest Hemingway, Laurence Sterne, and Eugene Jolas. The Black Sun Press evolved into one of the most important small presses in Paris in the 1920s. After Harry died in a suicide pact with one of his many lovers, Caresse Crosby continued publishing into the 1940s.

The Fire Princess

On July 9, 1928, Harry met 20-year-old Josephine Noyes Rotch, the daughter of Arthur and Helen Ludington Rotch in Boston. Ten years his junior, they met while she was shopping in Venice at the Lido for her wedding trousseau. She had belonged to the Vincent Club and the Junior League and graduated from Lee School before she had attended Bryn Mawr. After only two years at Bryn Mawr she left because she planned to marry Albert Smith Bigelow."She was dark and intense... since the season of her coming out in 1926-7, she had been known around Boston as fast, a 'bad egg'...with a good deal of sex appeal."

They met for sex as often as her eight days in Venice would allow. He would later call her the "Youngest Princess of the Sun" and the "Fire Princess." She was also from a prominent Boston family that first settled in Provincetown on

Cape Cod in 1690. Josephine would inspire Crosby's next collection of poems which he dedicated to her, titled Transit of Venus. In a letter dated July 24, 1928, Crosby detailed the affair to his mother, in whom he had always confided:

I am having an affair with a girl I met (not introduced) at the Lido. She is twenty and has charm and is called Josephine. I like girls when they are very young before they have any minds.

Josephine and Harry had an ongoing affair until June 21, 1929, when she married Albert Smith Bigelow. Their affair was over—until August, when Josephine contacted Crosby and they rekindled the affair as her husband became a first year graduate student of architecture at Harvard. Unlike his wife Caresse, Josephine was quarrelsome and prone to fits of jealousy. She bombarded Harry with half incoherent cables and letters, anxious to set the date for their next tryst.

Visit to United States

In December 1929, the Crosbys returned to the United States for a visit and the Harvard-Yale football game. Harry and Josephine met and traveled to Detroit where they checked into the expensive ($12 a day) Book-Cadillac Hotel as Mr. and Mrs Harry Crane. For four days they took meals in their room, smoked opium, and had sex. On December 7, 1929, the lovers returned to New York where Josephine said she was going to return to Boston and her husband. On the evening of December 7, Crosby's friend Hart Crane threw a party to celebrate his completion after seven years of his poem, The Bridge, which was to be published by the Black Sun Press, and to bid Harry and Caresse bon voyage, since they were due to sail back to France the next week. Among the guests present were Margaret Robson, Malcolm Cowley, Walker Evans,E. E. Cummings, and William Carlos Williams. The party went on until nearly dawn, and Harry and Caresse made plans to see Crane again on December 10 to see the popular Broadway play Berkeley Square before they left for Europe.

On December 9 Josephine, who instead of returning to Boston had stayed with one of her bridesmaids in New York, sent a 36-line poem to Harry Crosby, who was staying with Caresse at the Savoy-Plaza Hotel. The last line of the poem read:

Death is our marriage.

On the same day, Harry Crosby wrote his final entry in his journal:

One is not in love unless one desires to die with one's beloved. There is only one happiness it is to love and to be loved.

Lovers found dead

On the evening of the play, December 10, 1929, Caresse, Harry's mother Henrietta Grew, and Hart Crane met for dinner before the play, but Harry was a no-show. It was unlike him to worry Caresse needlessly. She called their friend Stanley Mortimer at his mother's apartment, whose studio Harry was known to use for his trysts. He agreed to check his studio. Mortimer had to enlist help to break open the locked door and found Harry and Josephine's bodies. Harry was in bed with a .25 caliber bullet hole in his right temple next to Josephine, who had a matching hole in her left temple, in what appeared to be a suicide pact. Harry was still clutching the Belgian automatic pistol in one hand, Josephine in the other.

The steamship tickets he had bought that morning for the return to Europe with Caresse were in his pocket. The coroner also found in his pocket a cable from Josephine addressed to Harry on the Mauretania before they arrived in

New York: "CABLE GEORGE WHEN YOU ARRIVE AND WHERE I CAN TELEPHONE YOU IMMEDIATELY. I AM IMPATIENT." A second cable from another girl simply said, "YES." A picture of Zora, the 13-year-old girl he had sex with in Egypt, was reportedly found in his wallet. The coroner reported that Harry's toenails were painted red, and that he had a Christian cross tattooed on the sole of one foot and a pagan icon representing the sun on the other.he coroner concluded that Josephine had died at least two hours before Harry. There was no suicide note, and newspapers ran sensational articles for days about the murder or suicide pact—they could not decide which.

Harry's wedding ring was found crushed on the floor, not on his finger, where he always promised Caresse it would remain.Caresse refused to witness the carnage and begged Archibald MacLeish, who was in town from his farm, to take charge. Harry's suicide was cited by later writers as emblematic of the Lost Generation.

Scandal follows

The next day the headlines revealed all: Tragedy and Disgrace. As Josephine had died at least two hours before Harry, and there was no suicide note, newspapers ran articles for many days speculating about the murder or suicide pact. The New York Times front page blared, "COUPLE SHOT DEAD IN ARTISTS' HOTEL; Suicide Compact Is Indicated Between Henry Grew Crosby and Harvard Man's Wife. BUT MOTIVE IS UNKNOWN He Was Socially Prominent in Boston—Bodies Found in Friend's Suite." The New York newspapers decided it was a murder-suicide.

Gretchen Powell had lunch with Harry the day of his death. Her memory of the luncheon supported the notion that Josephine was one of Harry's many passing fancies. She related that Harry had told her "the Rotch girl was pestering him; he was exasperated; she had threatened to kill herself in the lobby of the Savoy-Plaza if he didn't meet her at once."

The deaths polarized the several prominent families affected. The Rotch family considered Josephine's death to be murder. Josephine's erstwhile husband Albert Bigelow blamed Harry for "seducing his wife and murdering her because he couldn't have her."

Harry's poetry possibly gave the best clue to his motives. Death was "the hand that opens the door to our cage the home we instinctively fly to." His death mortified proper society. Harry's biographer Wolff wrote,

He had meant to do it; it was no mistake; it was not a joke. If anything of Harry Crosby commands respect, perhaps even awe, it was the unswerving character of his intention. He killed himself not from weariness or despair, but from conviction, and however irrational, or even ignoble, this conviction may have been, he held fast to it as to a principle. He killed himself on behalf of the idea of killing himself.

Crosby's death, given the macabre circumstances under which it occurred, scandalized Boston's Back Bay society.

Legacy

Harry's friend Hart Crane committed suicide less than two years later. Malcolm Cowley, whom Harry had published, wrote in his 1934 book Exile's Return that the death of "Harry Crosby becomes a symbol" of the rise and fall of the Jazz Age. He recited the excesses typified by Harry's extravagant lifestyle as evidence of the shallowness of society during that era. When he edited and reissued the book in 1951, he softened his opinion of Crosby somewhat. "I had written at length about the life of Harry Crosby, who I scarcely know," he wrote, "in order to avoid discussing the more recent death of Hart Crane, whom I know so well that I couldn't bear to write about him."

After Harry Crosby's suicide, Caresse continued the work of the Black Sun

Press. She also established, with Jacques Porel, a side venture, Crosby Continental Editions, that published paperback books by Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Dorothy Parker, among others. The paperback books did not sell well, and Crosby Continental closed in 1933. The Black Sun Press, however, continued publishing into the 1950s. The Black Sun Press produced finely crafted books in small editions, including works by, among others, D. H. Lawrence, Archibald MacLeish, James Joyce, Kay Boyle, and Hart Crane.

In 1931, Caresse also published Torchbearer, a collection of his poetry with an afterward by Ezra Pound, and Aphrodite in Flight, a seventy-five paragraph-long prose-poem and how-to manual for lovers that compared making love to a woman to flying planes. Caresse published a boxed set of Harry's work titled Collected poems of Harry Crosby containing Chariot of the Sun with D. H. Lawrence's intro, Transit of Venus with T. S. Eliot's intro, Sleeping Together with Stuart Gilbert's intro and Torchbearer in 1931. It was hand-set in dorique type; only 50 copies were printed.

Caresse Crosby edited and published Harry's diaries and papers. She wrote and published Poems for Harry Crosby in 1931. She also published and translated some of the works of Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Dorothy Parker among others. The Black Sun Press enjoyed the greatest longevity among the several expatriate presses founded in Paris during the 1920s. Through 1936, it published nearly three times as many titles as did Edward Titus through his Black Manikin Press.

Books printed by the Black Sun Press are valued by collectors. Each book was hand-designed, beautifully printed, and illustrated with elegant typeface. A rare volume published by the Black Sun press of Hart Crane's book-length poem The Bridge, including photos by Walker Evans, was sold by Christie's in 2009 for US$21,250. In 2009, Neil Pearson, an antiquarian books expert, said that "A Black Sun book is the literary equivalent of a Braque or a Picasso painting—except it’s a few thousand pounds, not 20 million."

A new collection of Harry Crosby's poetry, Ladders to the Sun: Poems by Harry Crosby was published by Soul Bay Press in April 2010.

In 2004, Fine Line Features optioned Andrea Berloff's first screenplay "Harry & Caresse." Lasse Hallström was initially attached to direct and Leslie Holleran was attached as a producer.

Works:

Sonnets for Caresse. (1925) Paris, Herbert Clarke.
Sonnets for Caresse. (1926) 2nd Edition. Paris, Herbert Clarke.
Sonnets for Caresse. (1926) 3rd Edition. Paris, Albert Messein.
Sonnets for Caresse. (1927) 4th Edition. Paris, Editions Narcisse.
Red Skeletons. (1927) Paris, Editions Narcisse.
Hindu Love Manual (1928) 20 copies
Chariot of the Sun. (1928) Paris, At the Sign of the Sundial.
Shadows of the Sun. (1928) Paris, Black Sun Press.
Transit of Venus. Volume 1 .(1928) Paris, Black Sun Press.
Transit of Venus. Volume 2. (1929) Paris, Black Sun Press. 1929 (500 copies printed)
Mad Queen. (1929) Paris, Black Sun Press.
Shadows of the Sun-Series Two. (1929) Paris, Black Sun Press.
The Sun. (1929) Paris, Black Sun Press.
Sleeping Together. (1929) Paris, Black Sun Press. (500 copies printed)
A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy Laurence Sterne, (1929) Paris, illus. by Polia Chentoff 400 copies
Shadows of the Sun-Series Three. (1930) Paris, Black Sun Press.
Aphrodite in Flight: Being Some Observations on the Aerodynamics of Love. (1930 Paris, Black Sun Press.
Collected Poems of Harry Crosby. (4 Volumes). (1931-32) Paris, Black Sun Press.
War Letters. Preface by Henrietta Crosby. (1932) Paris, Black Sun Press.

Assassin

I exchange eyes with the Mad Queen.
The mirror crashes against my face and bursts into a thousand suns. all over the city flags cracle and bang. Fog horns scream in the harbor. The wind hurricanes through the window. Tornadoes are unmuzzled as I begin to dance the dance of the Kurd Shepherds.
I stamp upon the floor. I whirl like dervishes. Colors revolve dressing and undressing. I lash them with fury stark white with iron black harsh red with blue marble green with bright orange and only gold remains naked. I roar with joy.
Black-footed ferrets disappear into holes.
The sun tattooed on my back begins to spin faster and faster whirring whirring throwing out a glory of sparks. Sparks shoot off into space sparks into shooting stars. Shooting stars collide with comets. Explosions. Naked colors explode into Red Disaster.
I crash out through a window naked wide-spread upon a Heliosaurus. I uproot an obelisk and plunge it into the ink-pot of the Black Sea. I write the word SUN across the dreary palimpsest of the world. I pour the contents of the Red Sea down my throat. I erect catapults and lay seige to the cities of the world. I scatter violent disorder throughout the kingdoms of the world. I stone the people of the world. I stride over mountains. I pick up oceans like tin cards and spin them into oblivion. I kick down walled cities. I hurl giant firebrands against governments. I thrust torches through the eyes of the law.
I annihilate museums. I demolish libraries. I oblivionize skyscrapers.
I become hard as adamant strong as battleindurated with solid fire rigid with hatred.
I bring back the wizards and sorcerers the necromancers the magicians. I practice witchcraft. I set up idols. With a sharp-edged sword I cut through the crowded streets. Comets follw in my wake. Stars make obeisance to me. The moon uncovers her nakedness to me.
I am the harbiger of a New Sun World. I bring the seed of a New Copulation. I proclaim the Mad Queen.
I stamp out vast empires. I crush palaces in my rigid hands. I harden my heart against churches.
I blot out cemetaries. I feed the people with stinging nettles. I resurrect madness. I thrust my naked sword between the ribs of the world. I murder the world!

Harry Crosby

Baudelaire

I think I understand you, Baudelaire,
With all your strangeness and perverted ways,
You whose fierce hatred of dull working days
Led you to seek your macabre visions there
Where shrouded night came creeping to ensnare
Your phantomfevered brain, with subtle maze
Of decomposéd loves, remorse, dismays,
And all the gnawing of a world's despair.
Within my soul you've set your blackest flag
And made my disillusioned heart your tomb ;
My mind which once was young and virginal
Is now a swamp, a spleenfilled pregnant womb
Of things abominable, things androgynal,
Flowers of Dissolution, Fleurs du Mal.

Harry Crosby

Dissonance

You've slipped from out your evening gown, you muse
Before the polished lookingglass, a hand
Unclasping frail corsage, while you peruse
Your blushing charms. Your wayward eyes demand
Intrigue, as slowly you remove the clothes
Which cling around your girlish loveliness.
In silken stockings of the palest rose
Your slender legs encased, twin gracefulness
Beyond compare, while all your perfumed hair
Comes tumbling down and glorybath of gold ;
And thus you stand before me ivorybare
Craving to yield in passion as of old.
I take you in my arms yet am I sad,
So many other loves have made you glad

Harry Crosby

Dryade

Raymonde
If it were not for you
I would not be glad today
And I would continue to dream
Of lovely ladies in lands long ago
Or of maidens
that have not yet been born
If it were not for you
I would not enjoy quiet
Neither the moonlight, nor the stars,
Nor could I appreciate the fountains
Whose cool fingers
Wander among violets.

And it is because of you
Because you are beautiful
That I weave colors in the sun
Through whose great garden we have strayed unveiled
Chaste, interlaced,
With broken thoughts, half-spun.

Harry Crosby

Firebrand

What is your feeling about the revolutionary spirit ofyour age, as expressed, for instance, in such movements as communism, surrealism, anarchism?
The revolutionary spirit of our age (as expressed by communism, surrealism, anarchism, madness) is a hot firebrand thrust into the dark lantern of the world.
In Nine Decades
a Mad Queen shall be born.

Harry Crosby

Folies de Femmes

In scarlet tunic rare a concubine
With subtle limbs, and breasts laid bare
For me to kiss. Soft eyes that sadly shine
A nubile maiden slave, intensely fair,
Strange frightened rose. A pagan priestess pale
Wearing a clinging robe of silvergreen.
In silken slashéd gold a houri frail
With veiléd face, mere child of seventeen.
But though my senses often are akin
To wretched trafficking, my soul is gold
And sails upon the winds, a harlequin
Unstained by sin and fearless as of old.
You are the lovely laughing columbine
Who fills my heart with dazzling amber wine.

Harry Crosby

Fragment

Moon of leaves,
Moon of the falling leaves,
To you I bring the slippers
of the sun.
That you may dance upon the
floor of sun,
My lady carries sun within her eyes.
Moon of the Unrevealed,
Moon of the gold-encrusted shield,
To you I bring the fragment
of my prayer.

Moon of the crinkled hair,
Tell me, will my lady yield
Eyes and mouth and breasts unsealed?
Will my lady yield?

Moon of the yellow streaked with red,
Moon that the sun would lead to bed,
Moon with the death's head
More than dead,
Why do you frighten the Goddess of Love,
Whose frail white fingers are moving above
The lover's white body lost in his love?
Moon, you are more than dead.

Moon of the ermine loist in the snow,
Moon of the frozen furbelow,
Moon of the nothingness here below,
Moon, you must go.

It is the Sun that tells you so-
Moon, you must go.

And I was dark beneath the moon,
And you were dark beneath the moon,
And we were dark beneath the moon.

Now I am gold beneath the sun,
Now you are gold beneath the sun,
Now we are gold beneath the Sun.

Harry Crosby

Gold and Grey

War was romantic in the days of old.
The knight rode forth to battle unafraid,
Wearing the favour of some royal maid
Who loved him for his courage lionbold.
And thus he sought adventures manifold
In joust and tourney midst fanfaronade
Of trumpets, or else fought in a crusade
Gainst infidels, his honour to uphold.
But modern war is not at all the same.
There are no plumes to catch my lady's eye.
In dugouts deep or trenches lashed by rain,
Where poison gas creeps in to suffocate,
Where bullets slap against the parapet,
And barbéd wire crucifies the slain.

Harry Crosby

Heliograph

(Self-Portrait) Omens and Astrology. A desert flat and undisturbed, stupid and forlorn. Sunless. a caravan of failures. Pons Asinorum and the Feast of the Ass and revolt against standardized American childhood.
War and Violence.
Catapults and Torches and the first stray thrusts of Sun into the Soul. Bombardments and Bordels. Heraldry and High Walls. Too rigid to crumble but not too strong to fracture.

Post-War Depression.
Extensive swamps formed by alcohol stagnating in the brain. Away from the gregariousness of the elephant towards the singleness of the hawk.

Omens and Astrology.
From Fog to Sun. Leaves and Inflorescence. Four columns of red marble. The scorification method. Love-Madness. Torchbearer and the complete entrance of Sun into Soul. Sunfire.

Boa Constrictor
through the thick grass. Red Skeletons. Silver Scar by Silver Image and Cicatrix. Reculer pour mieux avancer. The beaten forces were at last withdrawn safely into the Island.

The Primitive Method
of strengthening the soul by dropping red-hot sunstones into it. Rimbaud and Van Gogh. Counter-Attack. Turbulence. Chariot of the Sun.

The Mad Queen.
The violent state of fusion. Her Sun tattoed on my back. The bold progressive march to the Sun. Multiplication of Madness. anarchism. I lay siege to the Sun.

Harry Crosby

Hill of the Foreskins

what was the moment of coition like?
come Zariba let down your gates
turn turtle all you captives of the flesh

square suns
walled in by darkness from the crypt
young bodies stripped to make a mock of time
toy beauty dipped in feral wine

bones buried in the Wood
bones buried in the gold of Sun
bones buried in the very gates of War
(great searching of the gates)

impatient earthquake
shuffles all the pack
redeals the reds the golds the blacks

birdlike and blackened
secret as a door
sharp knives to stallion
through a forest floor
(great searching of the gates)
floodgates

the day is done
and I can feel the pebbles
in my hand
crumble and crumble
to a beach of sand
whereon you walk

(yet do they prance in
circumcision round the pole
stride over mountain Tops
gurgle the rising Tide)

and if a slender boat
should anchor near the Sun
would mad queens madly run
(girdles undone)
or would they come
black scaffolds to the Sun ?

Harry Crosby

I Drink To The Sun

Mad day flags crackling in the dawn the sharp intensity of drink dentelleries thrown over the mill fire sun and candlelight and at midnight I squeeze the juice of the silver fruit of the moon into the red glass of my heart. I drink to the Sun who lies concealed in his bed under the sheets of night. In the morning he will rise like a Red Indian to run his marathon across the sky.

Harry Crosby

In Search of the Young Wizard

I have invited our little seamstress to take her thread and needle and sew our two mouths together. I have asked the village blacksmith to forge golden chains to tie our ankles together. I have gathered all the gay ribbons in the world to wind around and around and around and around and around and around again around our two waists. I have arranged with the coiffeur for your hair to be made to grow into mine and my hair to be made to grow into yours. I have persuaded (not without bribery) the world's most famous Eskimo sealing-wax maker to perform the delicate operation of sealing us together so that I am warm in your depths, but though we hunt for him all night and though we hear various reports of his existence we can never find the young wizard who is able so they say to graft the soul of a girl to the soul of her lover so that not even the sharp scissors of the Fates can ever sever them apart.

Harry Crosby

Invocation to the Mad Queen

I would you were the hollow ship
fashioned to bear the cargo of my love
the unrelenting glove
hurled in defiance at our blackest world
or that great banner mad unfurled
the poet plants upon the hill of time
or else amphora for the gold of life
liquid and naked as a virgin wife.
Yourself the prize
I gird with Fire
The Great White Ruin
Of my Desire.
I burn to gold
fierce and unerring as a conquering sword
I burn to gold
fierce and undaunted as a lion lord
seeking your Bed
and leave to them the
burning of the dead.

Harry Crosby

Magic Formula

What heavens opened and blazed,
What sisters virtuous,
What arrows sprang to mark,
The trees so terrible and dark,
What years, what hopes,
What lions all amazed,
What fears disguised,
(These antelopes with frightened eyes)
What things are these?

These are the things that all day long
On things made new
After the sunset has merged with the dawn
I bring to you

These are the things that grow less and less
As sleep devours our nakedness.

Harry Crosby

Nor Look Behind

Remember Lot's wife
How like a woman in a barren field
No stronger than a flower
Not born in shame
Like the deaf adder
Adding fuel to the flame
Of virtue
Of weak minds
Of blame
In naked beauty more
The most when unadorned
Spare not nor look behind
Nor fear
Nor spare
The scorned.

Harry Crosby

Poem For The Feet Of Polia

they have walked through the gateways
of my eyes
they have climbed the mountains
of my body
they have marched across the desert
of my heart
they have forded the rivers
of my mind
they have penetrated into the dark forest
of my soul
if I were a cannibal I might devour them
if I were Pilate I might crucify them
if I were a sorcerer I might make them vanish away
if I were Neptune I might drown them
if I were a robber I might steal them

but I am a bridge to the sun
bridge leading away from a world of pain
bridge leading away from a night of sin
bridge over the abyss of doubt
bridge for the feet of Polia to the Sun

Harry Crosby

Proportionate

I never go to church to pray
Among the crowded pews
Nor kneel before a crucifix
To hail the king of Jews
I never say a prayer
To Saint or Holy Ghost
Nor listen to the preacher's word
That talks of sin the most

But in a pair of eyes
Or drinking silver gin
Or in the colors of a dress
My soul begins to sing

And sunbeams on the wall
Reveal sometimes for me
The beauty that I weave for God
And for Eternity.

Harry Crosby

Psycopathia Sexualis

Case 19)
X., peasant, aged thirty-four and a half; Sun-Worshipper. Father and Mother were hard drinkers. Since his fifth year patient has had epileptic convulsions-i.e. he falls down unconscious, lies still two or three minutes, and then gets up and runs directly with staring eyes towards the Sun. Sexuality was first manifested at seventeen. The patient had inclinations neither for women nor for men, but for constellations (stars, moons, suns et cetera). He had intercourse with stars and moons and later with comets and suns. Never any onanism.

The patient paints pictures of suns; is of a very limited intelligence. For years, religious paranoia, with states of ecstasy. He has an 'inexplicable' love for the Sun, for whom he would sacrifice his life. Taken to hospital, he proves to be free from infirmity and signs of anatomical degeneration.

Harry Crosby

Quatrains to the Sun

I
A sunfort flourished in my sunless heart
Beyond the Sun. Here in a tower apart
The sunbirds of my lady's eyes were caged
Alas, poor targets for the sun-god's dart.

II

The Sun at Chartres seen through an open door
Was like a nest, wherein I hatched a score
Of red-gold sun-thoughts. Now unheralded
They change to sun-nymphs on my heart's dark shore.

III

The Sun at noon is like a pool of gold
Towards whose uncertain brink the clouds have rolled
To quench their thirst. Likewise the invisible winds
Drink fire, and all my heart is sun-consoled.

IV

Like to a giant dragon in his cage
Of clouds the Sun in unconcealed rage
Glares down across the magic of the world
Intent upon this untried pasturage.

V

The Sun is a red arrow plunged to rest
In the dark target of the sea's wild breast
But morning shall unveil the gentle scene
Of sun-girls bathing in a palimpsest.

Harry Crosby

Requisates

Of the moon,
Of the wind,
Of the frozen sea,
As ice, be thou,
As evening dew,
As the icicle,
As unsunned snow,
As orchids I shall bring to you-
To me if you are not these
What care I how you be
I shall know tranquillity.

Harry Crosby

Ritual

Venus is sleeping with Fire
Because it is winter and cold

With Echo
(The sound of strange footsteps gold upon gold
As they pass through the door)

With Love
(As she goes to the Sun
And is seen by the world no more)

Among lanterns and torches
And flags unfurled
She and the Sun
Are not of this world.

Harry Crosby

Salome

Proud panoply of fans and frankincense,
Gold blare of trumpets, flowered robes of state,
Unnumbered symbols of magnificence,
To lead Salome through the palace gate,
Where loud the prophet of the Lord blasphemes
The red abominations of her race
And chides her for her flesh-entangled dreams
and turns his back upon her painted face.

Thus do we turn from some red-shadowed lust
That through the broken forests of the brain
Weaves silently with tentacles out-thrust,
Groping in darkness, but for one in vain,
For like a sliding sun the soul has fled
Leaving a princess and a vultured head.

Harry Crosby

Scorn

You business men with your large desks with your stenographers and your bell-boys and your private telephones I say to you these are the four walls of your cage.
You are tame as canaries with your small bird-brains where lurks the evil worm you are fat from being over-fed you know not the lean wild sunbirds that arrow down paths of fire.
I despise you. I am too hard to pity you. I would hang you on the gallows of the Stock Exchange. I would flay you with taxes. I would burn you alive with Wall Street Journals. I wouild condemn you to an endless round of bank banquets. I deride you. I mock at you. I laugh you to scorn.

Harry Crosby

Study for a Soul

the colors have begun to form
silvergray with cramoisy and gold
into an arrow carved by storm
beyond the fear of new and old
and where the arrow fits the bow
the untroubled darkness of her eyes
watches the red-gold target grow
strong is the sun that purifies

but I have sought in vain to find
the riddle of the bow and archer
there were no shadows left behind
after the heart's departure.

Harry Crosby

Sun-Rhapsody

The Sun! the Sun!
a fish in the aquarium of sky
or golden net to snare the butterfly
of soul
or else the hole
through which the stars have disappeared

it is a forest without trees
it is a lion in a cage of breeze
it is the roundness of her knees
great Hercules
and all the seas
and our soliloquies

winter-cold anchorite
summer-hot sybarite
to-day a lady wraped in clouds
tomorrow hunted by the hungry clouds
it is a monster that our thoughts have speared
the queen we chanticleered

a mother's womb
a child's balloon-
red burning tomb

Harry Crosby

Sun-Testament

I, The Sun, Lord of the Sky, sojourning in the Land of Sky, being of sound mind and memory, do hereby make, publish and declare the following to be my Last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all other wills, codicils and testamentary dispositions by me at any time heretofore made.

First, I hereby direct and elect that my estate shall be administered and my will construed and regulated and the validity and effect of the testamentary dispositions herein contained determined by the laws of the Sky.

Second, I give and bequeath absolutely to my wife, the Moon, four octrillion centuries of sun-rays, this legacy to have priority over all other legacies and bequests and to be free from any and all legacy, inheritance, transfer, successions, taxes or duties whatsoever, said taxes or duties to be borne by my estate.

Third, I give and bequeathe the sum of one million centuries of sun-rays net free from any and all legacy, inheritance, transfer, succession, taxes or duties whatsoever, said taxes or duties to be borne by my estate, to my Executors, to be used for the erecting of an Obelisk to the Sun.

Fourth, I give and bequeathe to my beloved wife the Moon my assortment of sunstones, my sun-yacht that for many aeons has navigated the sea of clouds, together with my collection of butterflies which are the souls of women caught in my golden web and my collection of red arrows which are the souls of men caught in my golden web.

Fifth, I give and bequeathe to my sons and daughters the stars, my mirror the ocean and my caravan of mountains.

Sixth, I give and bequeathe to Aurora Goddess of the Dawn a sunrise trumpet and a girdle of clouds.

Seventh, I give and bequeathe to the planet Venus all my eruptive prominences whether in spikes or jets or sheafs and volutes in honor of her all-too-few transits.

Eighth, I give and bequeathe to Lady Vesuvius a sunbonnet, a palace of clouds and the heart she once hurled up to me.

Ninth, I give and bequeathe to the Sun-Goddess Rat the Lady of Heliopolis and a garden of sunflowers.

Tenth, I give and bequeathe to Icarus a sunshade and a word of introduction to the Moon.

Eleventh, I give and bequeathe to Horus (Egyptian Hor) the falcon-headed solar divinity a thousand sun-hawks from my aviary to be mummified in his honor.

Twelfth, I give and bequeathe to Amenophus IV of Egypt my golden gourd that his thirst for me may be assuaged.

Thirteenth, I give and bequeathe to Renofer, High Priest of the Sun, my shares in Electric Horizens and Corona Preferred.

Fourteenth, I give and bequeathe to Louis XIV of France, Le Roi Soleil, my gold peruke.

Fifteenth, I give and bequeathe to Arthur Rimbaud a red sunsail.

Sixteenth, I give and bequeathe to my charioteer Phaeton my chariot of the sun and my chariot-horses Erythous Acteon Lampos Philogeus.

Seventeenth, I give and bequeathe to each of the Virgins of the Sun in Peru, to each and every citizen of Heliopolis, to the Teotitmocars of Mexico who built the giant pyramid to the Sun, to each and every of the Incas, to the Hyperboreans dwellers in the land of perpetual sunshine and great fertility beyond the north wind, my halo, rainbows and mirages, to the Surya-bans and the Chandra-bans of India to each a sunthought and to my lowly subject the Earth ten centuries of sunrays.

Eighteenth, I give and bequeathe likewise to the Japanese Flag whose center is a Red Sun and to the flags of Persia (the Lion and the Sun) and to the flags of Uraguay and Argentine my fiery flames and furious commotion.

Nineteenth, I give and bequeathe to all the inns, cabarets, bars, taverns, bordels whose ensign is the Sun, pieces of brocaded sunlight.

Twentieth, I give and bequeathe sunbonnets to various high monuments in particular the Eiffel Tower, the Woolworth Building, and to an imaginary tower built by the combined height of the phalluses of men.

Twenty-First, I give and bequeathe to Apollo of Greece a temple of the sun to Osiris of Egypt a temple of the sun to Indra of India a temple of the Sun this legacy is over and above any and all commissions to which they may be entitled as executors.

Twenty-Second, All the rest residue and remainder of my estate of whatsoever kind and nature, wheresoever situated, not specifically given or bequeathed hereinabove, including any and all void or lapsed legacies or bequests, I give, devise and bequeathe to Mithra of the Persians and to Surya of the Hindus, or to the survivor with the request that they establish therewith a fund for Sun-Birds (i.i. poets) to be organized and administered by them in their sole discretion and judgement, this fund to be known as the Sun and Moon Fund for Sun-Birds.

Twenty-Third, I hereby nominate, constitute and appoint Osiris of Egypt Apollo of Greece and Indra of India Executors of this my last will and testament.

In witness thereof, I have herewith set my hand and seal to this holographic will, entirely written and dated and signed by me at my Castle of Clouds this nineteenth day of January nineteen hundred and twenty eight.

Signed : The Sun

Signed, sealed, published and declared by The Sun, the Testator above named as and for his last Will and Testament in the presence of us who at his request and in his presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses thereto.

Hu of the Druids

Ptah of the Egyptians
Vitzliputsli of the Mexicans

Harry Crosby

Tattoo

I am the criminal whose chest is tattooed with a poinard above which are graven the words 'mort aux bourgeois'. Let us each tattoo this on our hearts.
I am the soldier with a red mark on my nakedness-when in a frenzy of love the mark expands to spell Mad Queen. Let us each tattoo our Mad Queen on our heart.
I am the prophet from the land of the Sun whose back is tattooed in the design of a rising sun. Let us each tattoo a rising sun on our heart.

Harry Crosby

Telephone Directory

<table border=0 cellpadding=2 cellspaing=0><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Aeronautical Corporation</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Cyclone 3030</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Chemical Corporation</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Gunpowder 3328</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Company for the Manufacture of Hand Grenades</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Gunpowder 8878</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Drug Store of Tonics and Stimulants</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Detonator 8808</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Dynamiting and Blasting Company</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Rackarock 4196</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Express Elevators</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Speedway 7898</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Fireworks Corporation</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Hurricane 1144</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Garage for Vandals of the Road</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Speedway 3984</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Hospital for Electrifying the Heart</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Cyclone 5679</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Jazz Band</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Detonator 8814</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Laboratory for the Manufacture of Aphrodisiacs</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Gunpowder 0090</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Lighting and Fuel Corporation</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Gunpowder 4301</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Manufacturers of High Explosives</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Thunderbolt 4414</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Racing Automobiles</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Speedway 6655</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Rum Distillery</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Explosion 1152</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Skyscrapers</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Hurricane 7444</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Society for the Vivisection of the Philistines</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Thunderbolt 8778</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Society of Incendiaries</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Rackarock 2254</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Steam Locomotive Company</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Speedway 1010</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Steam Roller Manufacturers</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Detonator 1234</td></tr><tr><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana, Helvetica">Mad Queen Windmills and Weathervanes</td><td align=left><font size=2 face="Verdana,

Helvetica">Hurricane 0164</td></tr></table>

Harry Crosby

Temple de la Douleur

My soul has suffered breaking on the wheel,
Flogging with lead, and felt the twinging ache
Of barbéd hooks and jagged points of steel,
Peine forte et dure, slow burning at the stake,
Blinding and branding, stripping on the rack,
The canque and kourbash and the torquéd screw,
The boot and branks, red scourging on the back,
The gallows and the gibbet. All for you.

These tortures are as nothing to the pain
That I have suffered when you gaze at me
With cold disdainful eyes. You do not deign
To smile or talk or even set me free-
Yet once you let me hold your perfumed hand
And danced with me a stately saraband.

Harry Crosby

The Golden Gourd

What chance have snakes upon an asphalt road
When giant limousines go gliding by,
Of courtesans resolved to gratify
The lust of lovers seeking new abode?
I do not envy the unfriended toad
Nor airships falling from a marble sky
Nor mothers listening to their children cry
What chance have blades of grass on being mowed?

And yet the unmolested Sun rolls on
A ship of gold among the silver clouds
Or else a lady wrapped in silver shrouds
to mock the crescent moon's pale skeleton.

Which strengthens me to live with heart assured
For I have drunken from the golden gourd.

Harry Crosby

They

Like mutilated skulls they roll
Across the soul's white sand
And only she can make a wall
And only she can understand
Let my experience be a lamp displayed
To light the untried lover to his maid.

Harry Crosby

Thorn In The Flesh

Thorn beneath the milk-white
Crowned with
In the flesh

Thorns beneath the
Rose without
On the ground
On the stalk

Thousands at her bidding speed
Countless mourn
Die without

Sunbeam in a winter's day
True as the dial to
True as the dial to
True as the dial
To you.

Harry Crosby

Threnody

O ye who claim to be our loyal friends
Come now and build for us a funeral pyre,
And lay our emptied bodies on the fire,
Pray for our souls, murmur your sad amens;
And while the gold and scarlet flame ascends
Let he who best can play upon the lyre,
Pluck slow regretful notes of deep desire,
Sing subtle songs of love that never ends.
and when at last the embers growing cold
Gather ye up our ashes in an urn
Of porphyry, and seek a forest old
There underneath some vast and mighty oak
choose ye our grave, spread over us a cloak
Of woven violets and filmy fern.

Harry Crosby

Unanswered

Why should I be subsevient to fate
Si peu de chose before a giant world
Poor little ship with little sail unfurled
To catch the sun-breze at the harbor gate?
Why should I be a coal within the grate
Of never-ending love? Why intercurled
With some strange mermaid whom the tempests hurled
Far up the shore that mortals desecrate?
Why all these whys and wherefores of the mind
That strike like arrows on a marble floor
Beyond whose frigidness red lions roar
To guard the Sun I gave my youth to find?
And why should drowning in the blackest sea
Be better than to worship at her knee?

Harry Crosby

Vision

I exchange eyes with the Mad Queen

the mirror crashes against my face
and bursts into a thousand suns
all over the city flags crackle and bang
fog horns scream in the harbor
the wind hurricanes through the window
and I begin to dance the dance of the
Kurd Shepherds

I stamp upon the floor
I whirl like dervishes

colors revolve dressing and undressing
I lash them with my fury
stark white with iron black
harsh red with blue
marble green with bright orange
and only gold remains naked

columns of steel rise and plunge
emerge and disappear
pistoning in the river of my soul
thrusting upwards
thrusting downwards
thrusting inwards
thrusting outwards
penetrating

I roar with pain

black-footed ferrets disappear into holes

the sun tattooed on my back
begins to spin
faster and faster
whirring whirling
throwing out a glory of sparks
sparks shoot off into space
sparks into shooting stars
shooting stars collide with comets

Explosions
Naked Colors Explode
Into
Red Disaster

I crash out through the
window naked, widespread
upon a
Heliosaurus
I uproot an obelisk and plunge

it into the ink-pot of the
Black Sea
I write the word
        SUN

Harry Crosby

Water-Lillies

Unwedded from the world, I stray through trees
To where a pool lies mirrored in the sun
A disk of polished gold that I have won
With labours not unknown to Hercules.
Slender they bathe, all naked as a breeze,
Their nipples hollow and their hair undone,
While from their widespread thighs cool ripples run
To rock the water-lilies round their knees.

Nymphs of the fountains, naiads innocent,
Frail sunbeams who have passed between my arms
So beautiful in your imprisonment,
Fill now my soul with symbols of delight:
Soft voices and soft fingers and soft charms
And the perfume of the lotus in the night.

Harry Crosby

Zorah

An Arab beats upon a kettle drum,
And tuneless is the wailing of the flutes
As on the sands a slavegirl executes
Her dance of wantonwild delirium;
Her body swaying like a pendulum
Backwards and forwards, while in evolutes
She weaves and weaves before fierce pagan brutes
Who gaze at her in wonder that is dumb.
I look upon her limbs bronzed by the sun,
And see within her eyes strange caravans,
Marching all day across blank desert lands,
Until they come at night to where in rings
The Nomad fires glimmer, one by one,
around the tombs of longforgotten kings.

Harry Crosby