



# 1923

december

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“Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

## DECORATION

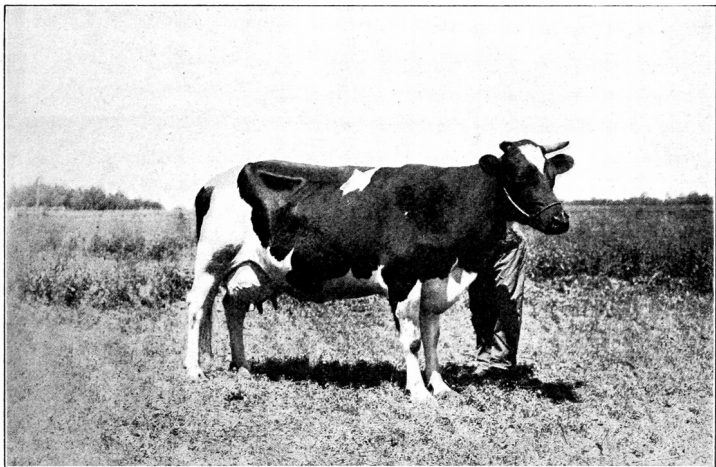
A MACAW preens upon a branch outspread  
With jewelry of seed. He's deaf and mute.  
The sky behind him splits like gorgeous fruit  
And claw-like leaves clutch light till it has bled.  
The raw diagonal bounty of his wings  
Scrapes on the eye color too chafed. He beats  
A flattered tail out against gauzy heats;  
He has the frustrate look of cheated kings.  
And all the simple evening passes by:  
A gillyflower spans its little height  
And lovers with their mouths press out their grief.  
The bird fans wide his striped regality  
Prismatic, while against a sky breath-white  
A crystal tree lets fall a crystal leaf.

## MEMORY

Do not guard this as rich stuff without mark  
Closed in a cedarn dark,  
Nor lay it down with tragic masks and greaves,  
Licked by the tongues of leaves.

Nor let it be as eggs under the wings  
Of helpless, startled things,  
Nor encompassed by song, nor any glory  
Perverse and transitory.

Rather, like shards and straw upon coarse ground,  
Of little worth when found,—  
Rubble in gardens, it and stones alike,  
That any spade may strike.



## THE ROMANTIC

ADMIT the ruse to fix and name her chaste  
With those who sleep the spring through, one and one,  
Cool nights, when laurel builds up, without haste,  
Its precise flower, like a pentagon.

In her obedient breast, all that ran free  
You thought to bind, like echoes in a shell.  
At the year's end, you promised, it would be  
The unstrung leaves, and not her heart, that fell.

So the year broke and vanished on the screen  
You cast about her; summer went to haws.  
This, by your leave, is what she should have been,—  
Another man will tell you what she was.

## SUB CONTRA

NOTES on the tuned frame of strings  
Plucked or silenced under the hand  
Whimper lightly to the ear,  
Delicate and involute,  
Like the mockery in a shell.  
Lest the brain forget the thunder  
The roused heart once made it hear,—  
Rising as that clamor fell,—  
Let there sound from music's root  
One note rage can understand,  
A fine noise of riven things.  
Build there some thick chord of wonder;  
Then, for every passion's sake,  
Beat upon it till it break.



## PORTRAIT

SHE has no need to fear the fall  
Of harvest from the laddered reach  
Of orchards, nor the tide gone ebbing  
    From the steep beach.

Nor hold to pain's effrontery  
Her body's bulwark, stern and savage,  
Nor be a glass, where to forsee  
    Another's ravage.

What she has gathered, and what lost,  
She will not find to lose again.  
She is possessed by time, who once  
    Was loved by men.

## CHORUS

I love\_\_ to dance\_\_ the dre

*mf-f*

This system contains the first two measures of the chorus. The vocal melody is in 3/4 time, starting with a quarter note, followed by a half note and a quarter note, then a half note and a quarter note. The piano accompaniment features a similar rhythmic pattern with chords. A dynamic marking of *mf-f* is present in the piano part.

go\_\_ When grand\_\_ m

This system contains the next two measures of the chorus. The vocal melody continues with a half note and a quarter note, then a half note and a quarter note. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a melodic line in the right hand. The system ends with a double bar line.



## LAST HILL IN A VISTA

COME, let us tell the weeds in ditches  
How we are poor, who once had riches,  
And lie out in the sparse and sodden  
Pastures that the cows have trodden,  
The while an autumn night seals down  
The comforts of the wooden town.

Come, let us counsel some cold stranger  
How we sought safety, but loved danger.  
So, with stiff walls about us, we  
Chose this more fragile boundary:  
Hills, where light poplars, the firm oak,  
Loosen into a little smoke.

## WOMEN

WOMEN have no wilderness in them,  
They are provident instead,  
Content in the tight hot cell of their hearts  
To eat dusty bread.

They do not see cattle cropping red winter grass,  
They do not hear  
Snow water going down under culverts  
Shallow and clear.

They wait, when they should turn to journeys,  
They stiffen, when they should bend.  
They use against themselves that benevolence  
To which no man is friend.

They cannot think of so many crops to a field  
Or of clean wood cleft by an axe.  
Their love is an eager meaninglessness  
Too tense, or too lax.

They hear in every whisper that speaks to them  
A shout and a cry.  
As like as not, when they take life over their door-sills  
They should let it go by.

## CHANSON UN PEU NAÏVE

What body can be ploughed,  
Sown, and broken yearly?  
She would not die, she vowed,  
But she has, nearly.

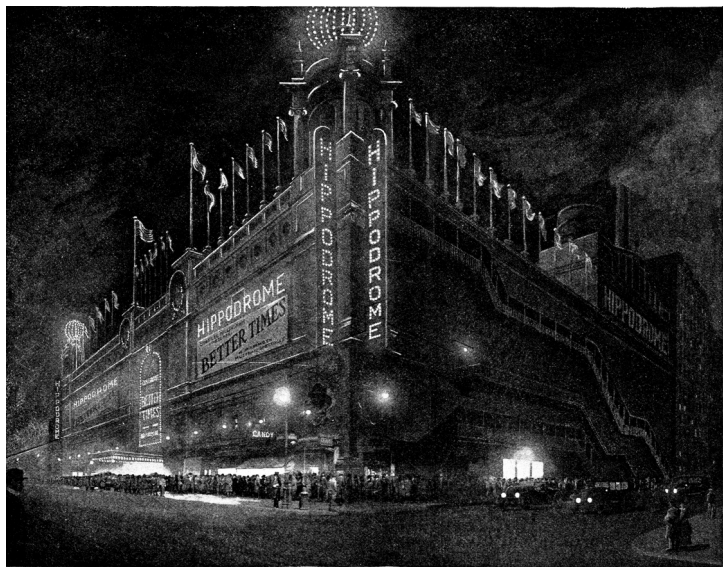
Sing, heart sing;  
Call and carol clearly.

And, since she could not die,  
Care would be a feather,  
A film over the eye  
Of two that lie together.

Fly, song, fly,  
Break your little tether.

So from strength concealed  
She makes her pretty boast:  
Plain is a furrow healed  
And she may love you most.

Cry, song, cry,  
And hear your crying lost.



## THE ALCHEMIST

I BURNED my life, that I might find  
A passion wholly of the mind,  
Thought divorced from eye and bone,  
Ecstasy come to breath alone.  
I broke my life, to seek relief  
From the flawed light of love and grief.

With mounting beat the utter fire  
Charred existence and desire.  
It died low, ceased its sudden thresh.  
I had found unmysterious flesh—  
Not the mind's avid substance—still  
Passionate beyond the will.



## KNOWLEDGE

Now that I know  
How passion warms little  
Of flesh in the mould,  
And treasure is brittle,—

I'll lie here and learn  
How, over their ground,  
Trees make a long shadow  
And a light sound.

This issue consists primarily of poems by Louise Bogan, published in a 1923 collection titled “Body of this Death.” The poems presented here are excerpted, and not arranged in the order in which they originally appear. The cover image is a modified detail from *Weird Tales* magazine. Additional images are “from the archives.” Thank you for everything.

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