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Poems for Workers

An Anthology

Edited by Manuel Gomez

Price, 10 Cents



Published for
THE WORKERS PARTY OF AMERICA
by

The Daily Worker Publishing Co.
CHICAGO, ILL.

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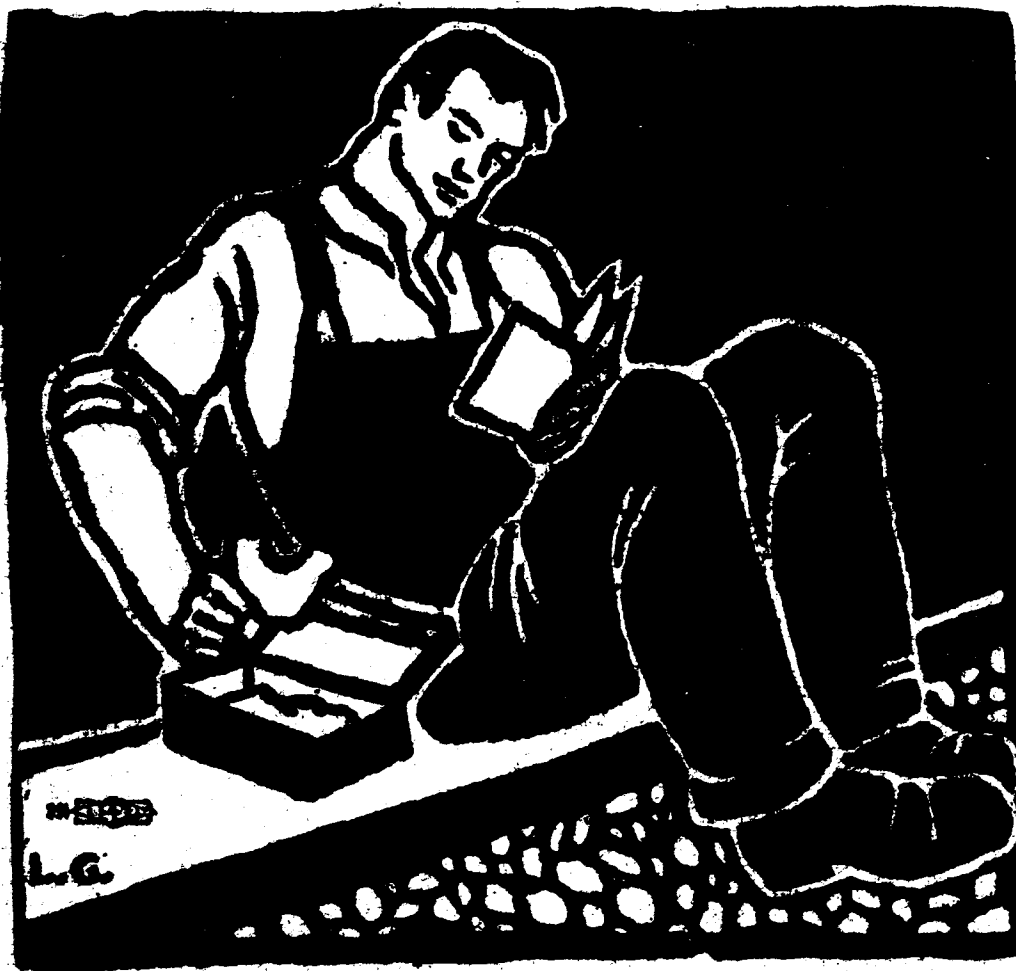
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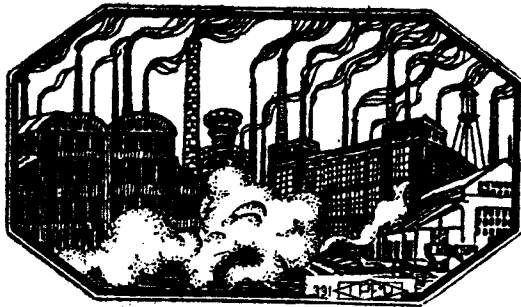
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Poems *for* Workers

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THE LITTLE RED LIBRARY No. 5



Preface

This anthology of poems for workers is, I think, the only one of its kind in the English language. Symposiums have been made of poems "about workers" and there have been a number of collections of poetry and prose gathered together under the general all-embracing head of "literature and art of the humanist thinkers of the world"—notably the well-known volume entitled "The Cry for Social Justice," edited by Upton Sinclair, which includes the chance writings on social justice of such anti-proletarian figures as Bismarck, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle, John D. Rockefeller, Rudyard Kipling . . . and even Hall Caine. The poems in the present booklet center upon the life, struggles and revolutionary movement of the working class. They are in fact an indivisible part of the working class struggle. Originally written for and directed to the working class, they are here collected for working class readers.

For the most part, the anthology consists of poems which I have seen here and there in labor periodicals and which I have cut out and saved over a period of years. The selection is therefore

quite arbitrary. It is, of course, by no means exhaustive. Readers will notice many omissions, some of which—like “The International”—were left out to make room for less familiar poems and others—like Arturo Giovanitti’s “The Walker”—because they were too long to be included. It is true that Giovanitti’s “When the Cock Crows” is even longer than “The Walker” but I do not think anyone will be sorry for its inclusion.

As already stated, I have thought it best to limit the selection to poems which belong directly to the class struggle. The majority of the authors have been themselves active in the revolutionary proletarian movement in some capacity or other, and many of them are active in the struggle at the present time. The following pages are thus commended to working class readers as a product of their own movement. Workers will see in these poems an earnest of the invincible sweep, the elemental necessity, the suffering and heroism, the sacrifice and courage, the bitterness and devotion, the steady persistence, the already dawning triumph, of the class struggle of the proletarians of all nations for the overthrow of wage-slavery and the establishment of a new society.

—M. G.

Acknowledgement is made to the periodicals in which the poems originally appeared: International Socialist Review, The Masses, Liberator, Solidarity, Industrial Worker, Industrial Pioneer, New York Call, Daily Herald (London), Workers Monthly. Also to the Century Company, for permission to reprint Louis Untermeyer's "Caliban in the Coal Mines"; to Henry Holt & Co., for some of Sandburg's poems; to Alfred A. Knopf, for poems by James Oppenheim, and to the Leonard Press, for poems by Ralph Chaplin.



"The Song of the Classes"

By ERNEST JONES

Chartist leader and poet, 1819-1869; sentenced in 1848
to two years imprisonment.

We plough and sow—we're so very, very low
That we delve in the dirty clay,
Till we bless the plain—with the golden grain,
And the vale with the fragrant hay.
Our place we know—we're so very low.
'Tis down at the landlord's feet:
We're not too low—the bread to grow,
But too low the bread to eat.

Down, down we go—we're so very, very low,
To the hell of the deep sunk mines,
But we gather the proudest gems that glow
Where the crown of a despot shines.
And whenever he lacks—upon our backs
Fresh loads he deigns to lay:
We're far too low to vote the tax,
But not too low to pay.

We're low—we're low—mere rabble, we know,
But at our plastic power
The mould at the lordlings' feet will grow
Into palace and church and tower—

Then prostrate fall—in the rich man's hall,
And cringe at the rich man's door:
We're not too low to build the wall,
But too low to tread the floor.

We're low—we're low—we're very, very low,
Yet from our fingers glide
The silken flow—and the robes that glow
Round the limbs of the sons of pride.
And what we get—and what we give—
We know, and we know our share:
We're not too low the cloth to weave,
But too low the cloth to wear.

We're low—we're low—we're very, very low,
And yet when the trumpets ring,
The thrust of a poor man's arm will go
Through the heart of the proudest king.
We're low—we're low—our place we know
We're only the rank and file,
We're not too low to kill the foe,
But too low to touch the spoil.

We Have Fed You All For a Thousand Years.

Poem—By an Unknown Proletarian.

We have fed you all, for a thousand years
And you hail us still unfed,
Though there's never a dollar of all your wealth
But marks the worker's dead.
We have yielded our best to give you rest
And you lie on crimson wool.
Then if blood be the price of all your wealth,
Good God! We have paid it in full.

There is never a mine blown skyward now
But we're buried alive for you.
There's never a wreck drifts shoreward now
But we are its ghastly crew.
Go reckon our dead by the forges red
And the factories where we spin.
If blood be the price of your cursed wealth
Good God! We have paid it in.

We have fed you all for a thousand years—
For that was our doom, you know,
From the days when you chained us in your fields
To the strike of a week ago.
You have taken our lives, and our babies and wives,
And we're told it's your legal share;
But if blood be the price of your lawful wealth
Good God! We have bought it fair.

A Woman's Execution.

By EDWARD KING.

Written after the fall of the Paris Commune of 1871, when the Communards were being slaughtered by black reaction. The author was an American journalist who lived from 1848 to 1896.

Sweet-breathed and young,
The people's daughter,
No nerves unstrung,
Going to slaughter.

"Good morning, friends,
You'll love us better—
Make us amends:
We've burst your fetter!

"How the sun gleams!
(Women are snarling):
Give me your beams,
Liberty's darling!

"Marie's my name;
Christ's mother bore it.
The badge? No shame:
Glad that I wore it!"

(Hair to the waist,
Limbs like a Venus):
Robes are displaced:
"Soldiers, please screen us!

"He at the front?
That is my lover:
Stood all the brunt;—
Now—the fight's over.

"Powder and bread
Gave out together:
Droll to be dead
In this bright weather!

"Jean, boy, we might
Have married in June!
This is the wall? Right!
VIVE LA COMMUNE!"

The Legacy.

By JAMES CONNOLLY.

Connolly is known to all Irishmen as the leader of the Irish Citizen Army, the soul of the Easter Rebellion of 1916, in which Connolly lost his life. He was not only a fighter for Irish independence but also for the emancipation of the working class from wage slavery. He was a revolutionary Marxist, editor of the famous journal, "The Workers' Republic." This poem is inscribed to his son.

"Thy father is a poor man," mark well what that may
mean,
On the tablets of thy memory that truth write bright and
clean,
The father's lot it was to toil from earliest boyhood on,
And know his latent energies for a master's profit drawn.
Or else, ill-starred, to wander round and huckster-like to
vend
His precious store of brain and brawn to all whom fate
may send
Across his path with gold enough to purchase labor's
power,
To turn it into gold again, and fructify the hour
With sweat and blood of toiling slaves like unto us my
son;

Aye, through our veins since earliest days, 'tis poor
man's blood has run. . .

Treasure ye in your inmost heart this legacy of hate
For those who on the poor man's back have climbed to
high estate,
The lords of land and capital, the slave lords of our age,
Who of this smiling earth of ours have made for us a
cage. . .

And howsoe'er you earn your wage, and wheresoe'er you
go,
Be it beneath the tropic heat or 'mid the northern snow,
Or closely pent in factory walls, or burrowing in the
mine,
Or scorching in the furnace hell of steamers 'cross the
brine. . .

The men and women of your class, tell them their wrongs
and yours—
Plant in their hearts that hatred deep that suffers and
endures,
And treasuring up each deed of wrong, each scornful
word and look,
Inscribe it in the memory, as others in a book.
And wait and watch through galling years the ripening
of time,
Yet deem to strike before that hour were worse than
folly—crime!

"Gunmen" in West Virginia.

By A Paint Creek Miner.

The hills are very bare and cold and lonely;
I wonder what the future months will bring.
The strike is on—our strength would win, if only—
O, Buddy, how I'm longing for the spring!

They've got us down—their martial lines enfold us;
They've thrown us out to feel the winter's sting,
And yet, by God, those curs can never hold us,
Nor could the dogs of hell do such a thing!

It isn't just to see the hills beside me
Grow fresh and green with every growing thing;
I only want the leaves to come and hide me,
To cover up my vengeful wandering.

I will not watch the floating clouds that hover
Above the birds that warble on the wing;
I want to use this GUN from under cover—
O, Buddy, how I'm longing for the spring!

You see them there, below, the damned scab-herders!
Those puppets on the greedy Owner's String;
We'll make them pay for all their dirty murders—
We'll show them how a starveling's hate can sting!

They riddled us with volley after volley;
We heard their speeding bullets zip and ring,
But soon we'll make them suffer for their folly—
O, Buddy, how I'm longing for the spring!

Pittsburgh

By JAMES OPPENHEIM.

Over his face his gray hair drifting, hides his Labor-
glory in smoke,
Strange through his breath the soot is sifting, his feet
are buried in coal and coke.
By night hands twisted and lured in fires, by day hands
blackened with grime and oil,
He toils at the foundries and never tires, and ever and
ever his lot is toil.
He speeds his soul till his body wrestles with terrible
tonnage and terrible time,
Out through the yards and over the trestles the flat-
cars clank and the engines chime,
His mills through windows seem eaten with fire, high
cranes travel, his ingots roll,
And billet and wheel and whistle and wire shriek with
the speeding up of his soul.
Lanterns with reds and greens a-glisten wave the way
and the head-light glares,
The back-bent laborers glance and listen and out through
the night the tail-light flares—
Deep in the mills like a tipping cradle the huge converter
turns on its wheel
And sizzling spills in the ten-ton ladle a golden water of
molten steel.
Yet screwed with toil his low face searches shadow-
edged fires and whilted pits,

Gripping his levers his body lurches, grappling his irons
he prods and hits,
And deaf with the roll and clangor and rattle with its
sharp escaping staccato of steam,
And blind with flame and worn with battle, into his ton-
nage he turns his dream.
The world he had built rises around us, our wonder
cities and weaving rails,
Over his wires a marvel has found us, a glory rides in
our wheeled mails,
For the Earth grows small with strong Steel woven, and
they come together who plotted apart—
But he who has wrought this thing in his oven knows
only toil and the tired heart.

Bread and Roses.

By JAMES OPPENHEIM.

(In a parade of textile workers during the great strike at Lawrence, Mass., some young girls carried a banner inscribed, "We want Bread, and Roses, too!")

As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill-lofts gray
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun
discloses,
For the people hear us singing, "Bread and Roses, Bread
and Roses."

As we come marching, marching, we battle, too, for
men—
For they are women's children and we mother them
again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life
closes—
Hearts starve as well as bodies; Give us Bread, but give
us Roses!

Bellies

By JIM WATERS.

At Washington,
I saw a bass-drum belly
Waddling through a luxurious corridor of the Capitol.
This belly was a high dignitary
Who sits on an authoritative bench,
And dictates the laws of the gaunt bellies of the poor.
There were other bass-drum bellies waddling about
And lounging in executive chambers;
They make the laws for the gaunt bellies of the poor.
And I saw the bass-drum bellies of the rich,
The bankers, the industrial magnates and their lackeys,
Laughing, talking, whispering with these official bass-
drum bellies.
And I thought: "What can be the meaning of all this?"
I looked to the North and saw the gaunt bellies
of strikers unlawfully beaten and jailed.
I looked to the South and saw the gaunt bellies
of factory children denied their constitutional rights.
I looked to the West and saw the gaunt bellies
of farmers bankrupt by legalized robbery.
Everywhere I looked I saw the gaunt bellies of the poor
Oppressed and denied their constitutional rights
By these official bass-drum bellies at Washington.
Surely, I thought: "This is a Belly Government,
Of, by and for the bass-drum bellies of the rich."

Statistics

By JIM WATERS.

I'm tired of listening to sun-shine talk,
This pie-in-the-sky stuff,
This travesty on patient toil;
Let the Jesus-screamers,
The open-shop artists,
And their ilk. . . .
Hook their fat necks over a flying emery wheel
For. . . . eight. . . . long. . . . hours;
And to the beat and whir of machinery,
Chant this:
"I work to get money to buy food to get strong,
So I can work to get money to buy food and get
strong." . . .
Then, maybe, they will understand
Why the church pews are empty,
And men die for unionism.

"Canned"

By JIM WATERS

To hell with you!
You ain't the whole earth,
Not by a damn sight!

You sneak around shaking your fat paunch shouting:
"I'm losing money . . . hurry-up . . . pull-out. . .
"Step-on-it!" . . . and you "can" anybody that talks back.
I've seen your kind before—always losing money—
Riding in limousines, showing off on the golf links,
And talking open shop at the Union Club.
On Sunday you go to church and tell everybody
What a nice employer you are . . .
On Monday you go blue in the face cursing your men.
You can't bull-doze me!

To hell with you!
You ain't the whole earth,
Not by a damn sight!

An Administration Delegate Reports

By JIM WATERS

(Ted Miller—that isn't his name, but it will do just as well—is a rock-ribbed reactionary, a defender of the American Constitution and protector of the sanctity of the home. He is down on all Reds. So the bureaucrats in the central labor body picked him out to represent them at the A. F. of L. convention at El Paso. This is what Ted reported when he got back. It is not fiction. Ted is a real person, and the story was taken down pretty nearly verbatim.)

“Well, brothers,
I got back from the Texas Convention last night,
And I sure want to thank you for the trip.
The convention was called on the Seventeenth
And adjourned on the Twenty-fourth.
We all had a good time.
Most of the boys spent their time in Juarez.
That's sure some town . . .
They don't have keys in that town . . .
Whisky . . . two dollars a quart . . . good stuff.
Plenty of beer. The Mexicans make a drink
Called pulki . . . it would make a man kill his mother.
We sure had plenty to drink. . .
Now I've seen lots of bull thrown around here,
But down there I saw them killed by the car load.
And cock fights! . . . Christ, them long-legged birds
Can fight like hell . . . never seen anything like it.

We sure had a good time . . .
And women . . . a man's a hog that wants better variety;
And nationality, color, size, any age from twelve to sixty.
I was too drunk to see good, but they looked pretty clean.
Well, brothers, I don't know of any more to say,
Only, I sure want to thank you for the trip.

“Oh, just another word, brothers.
You remember the big schooners O'Sullivan used to put
out?
Them two-handled ones?
Well, that's how they serve beer in Juarez.”

When the Cock Crows

By ARTURO GIOVANNITTI

To the Memory of Frank Little, Hanged at Midnight.

I.

SIX MEN drove up to his house at midnight and woke the
poor woman who kept it.
And asked her: "Where is the man who spoke against
the war and insulted the army?"
And the old woman took fear of the men and the hour,
and showed them the room where he slept,
And when they made sure it was he whom they wanted,
they dragged him out of his bed with blows, tho'
he was willing to walk,
And they fastened his hands on his back, and they drove
him across the black night,
And there was no moon and no stars and not any visible
thing, and even the faces of the men were eaten
with the leprosy of the dark, for they were masked
with black shame,
And nothing showed in the gloom save the glow of his
eyes and the flame of his soul that scorched the
face of Death.

II.

NO ONE gave witness of what they did to him, after
they took him away, until a dog barked at his
corpse,

But I know, for I have seen masked men with the rope,
and the eyeless things that howl against the sun,
and I have ridden beside the hangman at midnight.
They kicked him, they cursed him, they pushed him, they
spat on his cheeks and his brow,
They stabbed his ears with foul oaths, they smeared his
clean face with the pus of their ulcerous words.
And nobody saw or heard them. But I call you to witness
John Brown, I call you to witness, you Molly
Macguires,
And you Albert Parsons, George Engel, Adolph Fischer,
August Spies,
And you Leo Frank, kinsman of Jesus, and you, Joe Hill,
twice my germane in the rage of the song and the
fray,
And all of you, sun-dark brothers, and all of you harriers
of torpid faiths, hasteners of the great day, propitiators
of the holy deed,
I call you all to the bar of the dawn to give witness if
this is not what they do in America when they
wake up men at midnight to hang them until
they're dead.

III.

UNDER a railroad trestle, under the heart-rib of Progress,
they circled his neck with the noose, but never a
word he spoke.
Never a word he uttered, and they grew weak from his
silence,
For the terror of death is strongest upon the men with
the rope,

When he who must hang breathes neither a prayer nor a
curse,
Nor speaks any word, nor looks around, nor does any-
thing save to chew his bit of tobacco and yawn
with unsated sleep.
They grew afraid of the hidden moon and the stars, they
grew afraid of the wind that held its breath, and
of the living things that never stirred in their
sleep,
And they gurgled a bargain to him from under their
masks.
I know what they promised to him, for I have heard
thrice the bargains that hounds yelp to the
trapped lion:
They asked him to promise that he would turn back
from his road, that he would eat carrion as they,
that he would lap the leash for the sake of the
offals, as they—and thus he would save his life.
But not one lone word he answered—he only chewed his
bit of tobacco in silent contempt.

IV.

NOW BLACK as their faces became whatever had been
white inside of the six men, even to their mothers'
milk,
And they inflicted on him the final shame, and ordered
that he should kiss the flag.
They always make bounden men kiss the flag in Amer-
ica, where men never kiss men, even when they
march forth to die.

But tho' to him all flags are holy that men fight for
and death hallows,
He did not kiss it—I swear it by the one that shall wrap
my body.
He did not kiss it, and they trampled upon him in their
frenzy that had no retreat save the rope,
And to him who was ready to die for a light he would
never see shine, they said: "You are a coward",
To him who would not barter a meaningless word for
his life, they said: "You are a traitor",
And they drew the noose round his neck, and they pulled
him up to the trestle and they watched him un-
til he was dead,
Six masked men whose faces were eaten with the can-
cer of the dark,
One for each steeple of thy temple, O Labor.

V.

NOW HE IS dead, but now that he is dead is the door
of your dungeon faster, O money changers and
scribes, and priests and masters of slaves?
Are men now readier to die for you without asking the
wherefore of the slaughter?
Shall now the pent-up spirit no longer connive with the
sun against your midnight?
And are we now all reconciled to your rule, and are
you safer and we humbler, and is the night eternal
and the day forever blotted out of the skies,
And all blind yesterdays risen, and all tomorrows en-
tombbed,

Because of six faceless men and ten feet of rope and
one corpse dangling unseen in the blackness un-
der a railroad trestle?

No, I say, no! It swings like a terrible pendulum that
shall soon ring out a mad tocsin and call the red
cock to the crowing.

No, I say, no, for someone will bear witness of this to
the dawn,

Someone will stand straight and fearless tomorrow be-
tween the armed hosts of your slaves, and shout to
them the challenge of that silence you could not
break.

VI.

“BROTHERS—he will shout to them—are you then, the
Godborn, reduced to a mute of dogs

That you will rush to the hunt of your kin at the blow-
ing of a horn?

Brothers, have then the centuries that created new suns
in the heavens, gouged out the eyes of your soul,

That you should wallow in your blood like swine,

That you should squirm like rats in a carrion,

That you, who astonished the eagles, should beat blind-
ly about the night of murder like bats?

Are you, brothers, who were meant to scale the stars,
to crouch forever before a footstool,

And listen forever to one word of shame and subjection,

And leave the plough in the furrow, the trowel on the
wall, the hammer on the anvil, and the heart of
the race on the knees of screaming women, and
the future of the race in the hands of babbling chil-
dren,

And yoke on your shoulders the halter of hatred and
fury,
And dash head-down against the bastions of folly,
Because a colored cloth waves in the air, because a
drum beats in the street,
Because six men have promised you a piece of ribbon on
your coat, a carved tablet on a wall and your name
in a list bordered with black?
Shall you, then, be forever the stewards of death, when
life waits for you like a bride?
Ah, no, Brothers, not for this did our mothers shriek
with pain and delight when we tore their flanks
with our first cry;
Not for this were we given command of the beasts,
Not with blood but with sweat were we bidden to achieve
our salvation.
Behold! I announce now to you a great tidings of joy,
• For if your hands that are gathered in sheaves for the
sickle of war unite as a bouquet of flowers be-
tween the warm breasts of peace,
Freedom will come without any blows save the hammers
on the chains of your wrists, and the picks on the
walls of your jails!
Arise, and against every hand jeweled with the rubies
of murder,
Against every mouth that sneers at the tears of mercy,
Against every foul smell of the earth,
Against every head that a footstool raises over your
head,
Against every word that was written before this was
said,

Against every happiness that never knew sorrow,
And every glory that never knew love and sweat,
Against silence and death, and fear
Arise with a mighty roar!
Arise and declare your war;
For the wind of the dawn is blowing,
For the eyes of the East are glowing,
For the lark is up and the cock is crowing,
And the day of judgement is here!"

VII.

THUS shall he speak to the great parliament of the
dawn, the witness of this murderous midnight,
And even if none listens to him, I shall be there and ac-
claim,
And even if they tear him to shreds, I shall be there to
confess him before your guns, and your gallows, O,
Monsters!
And even tho' you smite me with your bludgeon upon
my head,
And curse me and call me foul names, and spit on my
face and on my bare hands,
I swear that when the cock crows I shall not deny him.
And even if the power of your lie be so strong that my
own mother curse me as a traitor with her hands
clutched over her old breasts,
And my daughters with the almighty manes, turn their
faces from me and call me coward,
And the One whose love for me is a battleflag in the
storm, scream for the shame of me and adjure my
name,

I swear that when the cock crows I shall not deny him.
And if you chain me and drag me before the Beast that
 guards the seals of your power, and the caitiff that
 conspires against the daylight demand my death,
And your hangman throw a black cowl over my head and
 tie a noose around my neck,
And the black ghoul that pastures on the graves of the
 saints dig its snout into my soul and howl the
 terrors of the everlasting beyond in my ears,
Even then, when the cock crows, I swear I shall not
deny him.
And if you spring the trap under my feet and hurl me
 into the gloom, and in the revelation of that in-
 stant eternal a voice shriek madly to me
That the rope is forever unbreakable,
That the dawn is never to blaze,
That the night is forever invincible,
Even then, even then, I shall not deny him.

Caliban in the Coal Mines

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

God, we don't like to complain—
We know that the mine is no lark—
But—there's the pools from the rain;
But—there's the cold and the dark.

God, You don't know what it is—
You, in Your well-lighted sky,
Watching the meteors whizz;
Warm, with the sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon,
Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,
Even You'd tire of it soon,
Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above,
And nothing that moves but the cars—
God, if You wish for our love,
Fling us a handful of stars!

Spring in New Hampshire

By CLAUDE McKAY.

Too green the springing April grass,
Too blue the silver-speckled sky,
For me to linger here, alas,
While happy winds go laughing by,
Wasting the golden hours indoors,
Washing windows and scrubbing floors.

Too wonderful the April night,
Too faintly sweet the first May flowers,
The stars too gloriously bright,
For me to spend the evening hours,
When fields are fresh and streams are leaping,
Wearied, exhausted, dully sleeping.

I. W. W.

By DONALD M. CROCKER.

Sons of the sansculottes,
Savage, erect, disdainful,
Proud of their pariah estate,
They return to the civilization that has cast them out,
Hate for hate and blow for blow.
Society denied them all life's sweet, soft, comfortable
things,
And so society raised up unto itself its destroyers.

Reckless of the jails, of the policemen's clubs, of the
lynching parties made up of frightened good
citizens,
Cheerfully accepting the anathema of all reputable peo-
ple and lovers of law and order,
They laugh aloud and sing out of their little red book
Blasphemous ribaldries against all the gods and all the
masters.

(Beware, gods and masters, of rebels who laugh and
sing!)

Onward to the conquest of earth these outlaws press,
Pausing by the corpses of their martyrs only long
enough

To utter, grim-lipped, "We remember."

Wheatland—A Memory

By MIRIAM ALLEN DeFORD.

Dust—powdery dust—

Dust on the long benches and the rickety chairs of the
courtroom—

Dust on the old-time desk with its hanging bulb con-
cealed in an inky blotter—

Dust on the table covered with scabby red oilcloth—

Dust on the two cells downstairs, with their barred
doors open to the street—

Dust on the heart of Wheatland—

Dust and cobwebs.

The wide empty street of Wheatland is vacant and quiet
as a melancholiac.

Somnolent shops snore by the raised wooden paving.

The tiny hotel is bare and casual.

Dust—dust—dust in the sunlight on the powdery roads,

Dust on the houses with their tired hedges of honey-
suckle,

Dust on the apathetic railroad station—

A curse of dust on the town of Wheatland.

The dust is all whispering. . .

It whispers in the drab rutted streets—

It whispers through the torn hanging window-shades of
the courtroom—

It whispers over the empty cells with their white-
washed sides scrawled with inscriptions—

(“Ten days”—“nine days more”—Kentucky Slim did

time here")—

It whispers ominously away off on the wind to the wheat-
fields and the hop-fields—

It whispers till the heart is chilled—

It whispers till Ford and Suhr can hear it in Folsom.

A curse of whispering dust on the town of Wheatland!

A curse of sleep on the town of Wheatland!

A curse of hops on the town of Wheatland!

A curse of memories on the town of Wheatland!

Mourn Not the Dead

By RALPH CHAPLIN.

Mourn not the dead that in the cool earth lie—
Dust unto dust—
The calm, sweet earth that mothers all who die
As all men must;
Mourn not your captive comrades who must dwell—
Too strong to strive—
Within each steel-bound coffin of a cell,
Buried alive;
But rather mourn the apathetic throng—
The cowed and the meek—
Who see the world's great anguish and its wrong
And dare not speak!

To France

By RALPH CHAPLIN.

Mother of revolutions, stern and sweet,
Thou of the red Commune's heroic days;
Unsheathe thy sword, let thy pent lightning blaze
Until these new bastiles fall at thy feet.
Once more thy sons march down the ancient street
Led by pale men from silent Pere la Chaise;
Once more La Carmagnole—La Marseillaise
Blend with the war drum's quick and angry beat.

Ah, France—our—France—must they again endure
The crown of thorns upon the cross of death?
Is morning here. . .? Then speak that we may know!
The sky seems lighter but we are not sure.
Is morning here. . .? The whole world holds its
 breath
To hear the crimson Gallic rooster crow.

The Red Guard

By RALPH CHAPLIN.

Sons of the dawn! No more shall you enslave
Nor lull them with your honeyed lies to sleep,
Nor lead them on like herds of human sheep,
To hopeless slaughter for the loot you crave.
For now upon you, wave on mighty wave,
The iron-stern battalions rise and leap
To extirpate your breed and bury deep
And sow with salt the unlamented grave!

Accursed Monster—nightmare of the years—
Pause but a moment ere you pass away!
Pause and behold the earth made clean and pure—
Our earth, that you have drenched with blood and tears—
Then greet the crimson usurer of Day—
The mighty Proletarian Dictature!

John Reed's Body

By MICHAEL GOLD.

John Reed, died in Moscow, October, 17, 1920.

John Reed, our captain, his body fills a grave.
The lion-heart is patient, the warrior is bones.
The grass is his brother, and his pulse once so brave,
Now beats but as faintly as atoms beat in stones.

Death is for dreaming, but now the world's in flame,
And we are living men, and hope is everywhere,
The strong unhappy poor, in Communism's name,
Are writing cannon-poems, that batter down despair.

So dream not, but chant the scarlet songs of Life,
Fight, sing and hope, for we are living men,
Raise John Reed's banner in the thickest of the strife
Ere we lie down to dream with him again.

Nobody Knows

By EDWARD CONNOR.

Oh, nobody knows where the hobo goes,
Nobody knows, nobody knows;
Nobody knows where the hobo goes,
That's the way the old song goes.
Boom a little saxophone, rap the little drums,
Make a little music for the doggone bums,
And we'll sing a little ditty till the old freight comes,
Then we're going where nobody knows.

There's nobody knows where the hobo goes
When the sun shines warm and jungles call,
Oh, nobody knows where the old bo goes
When the long straw's yellow in the fall.
Old cars a-coughin' up the old Soo line,
Hoosier's surely makin' that old separator whine,
Pitchin' in the field is where the old boes shine;
Oh, nobody knows where the old bo goes
When the long straw's yellow in the fall.

And nobody knows where the young bo goes
When the cold north wind
Starts to whistle through his clothes;
Oh, nobody knows where the young bo goes
When the snowballs rattle on his spine.
Turp' camp down in Gawgia,
Cracker on a stump;

Big bull whip he carries, makes the blizzard-dodgers
hump;

Watch 'em flag it out of Gawgia when they've done their
little bump;

But nobody knows where the young bo goes,
When the snowballs rattle on his spine.

Oh, nobody knows where the hobo goes,
When his pals don't meet him any more,
Nobody knows where the hobo goes,
When he's tapped on his last back door.
Katy flier strung him half a mile.
Not much left except the clothes he wore.

Not so loudly, saxophone; not so lively drum,
A little soft music for a hard luck bum,
And we'll sing a little ditty till the track hands come,
To put him where he should have been before.
For nobody knows where the hobo goes,
The young bo goes, the old bo goes,
Oh, nobody knows where the dead bo goes
When he's tapped on his last back door.

Muckers

By CARL SANDBURG.

Twenty men stand watching the muckers
Stabbing the sides of the ditch
Where clay gleams yellow,
Driving the blades of their shovels
Deeper and deeper for the new gas mains,
Wiping sweat off their faces
With red bandanas.

The muckers work on. . . pausing. . . to pull
Their boots out of suckholes where they slosh.

Of the twenty looking on
Ten murmur, "O, it's a hell of a job."
Ten others, "Jesus, I wish I had the job."

Graceland

By CARL SANDBURG.

Tomb of a millionaire,
A multi-millionaire, ladies and gentlemen,
Place of the dead where they spend every year
The usury of twenty-five thousand dollars
For upkeep and flowers
To keep fresh the memory of the dead.
The merchant prince gone to dust
Commanded in his written will
Over the signed name of his last testament
Twenty-five thousand dollars be set aside
For roses, lilacs, hydrangeas, tulips,
For perfume and color, sweetness of remembrance
Around his last long home.

(A hundred cash girls want nickles to go to the movies
tonight.

In the back stalls of a hundred saloons, women are at
tables

Drinking with men or waiting for men jingling loose
silver dollars in their pockets.

In a hundred furnished rooms is a girl who sells silk or
dress goods or leather stuff for six dollars a week
wages

And when she pulls on her stockings in the morning she
is reckless about God and the newspapers and the
police, the talk of her home town or the name
people call her.)

Anna Imroth

By CARL SANDBURG.

Cross the hands over the breast here—so.
Straighten the legs a little more—so.

And call for the wagon to come and take her home.
Her mother will cry some and so will her sisters and
brothers.

But all of the others got down and they are safe and
this is the only one of the factory girls who wasn't
lucky in making the jump when the fire broke.

It is the hand of God and the lack of fire escapes.

I am the People, the Mob

By CARL SANDBURG.

I am the people—the mob—the crowd—the mass.

Do you know that all the great work of the world is
done through me?

I am the workingman, the inventor, the maker of the
world's food and clothes.

I am the audience that witnesses history. The Napole-
ons come from me and the Lincolns, They die.
And I send forth more Napoleons and Lincolns.

I am the seed ground. I am a prairie that will stand for
much plowing. Terrible storms pass over me. I
forget. The best of me is sucked out and wasted.
I forget. Everything but Death comes to me and
makes me work and give up what I have. And
I forget.

Sometimes I growl, shake myself and spatter a few red
drops for history to remember. Then—I forget.

When I, the People, learn to remember, when I, the
People, use the lessons of yesterday and no longer
forget who robbed me last year, who played me
for a fool—then there will be no speaker in all the
world say the name: "The People," with any
fleck of a sneer in his voice or any far-off smile of
derision.

The mob—the crowd—the mass—will arrive then.

In Trafalgar Square

By FRANCIS W. L. ADAMS.

The stars shone faint through the smoky blue;
The church-bells were ringing;
Three girls, arms laced, were passing through,
Tramping and singing.

Their heads were bare; their short skirts swung
As they went along;
Their scarf-covered breasts heaved up, as they sung
Their defiant song.

It was not too clean, their feminine lay,
But it thrilled me quite
With its challenge to task-master villainous day
And infamous night.

With its threat to the robber rich, the proud,
The respectable free.
And I laughed and shouted to them aloud,
And they shouted to me!

“Girls, that’s the shout, the shout we will utter
When, with rifles and spades,
We stand, with the old Red Flag aflutter,
On the barricades!”

Slaves

By JOSEPH FREEMAN.

Again the grinding of the iron gods,
The old familiar fury of the wheels;
Again the accustomed clamor of the rods,
The giddy belting, and the room that reels;

The dim light dancing, and the shadows shaking,
The little sudden pains, the mute despairs,
The patient and the weary hands; till, waking,
At dusk, we tumble down the crazy stairs.

Night on the Convoy

Alexandria-Marseilles

By SIGFRIED SASSOON

Out in the blustering darkness, on the deck
A gleam of stars looks down. Long blurs of black,
The lean Destroyers, level with our track,
Plunging and stealing, watch the perilous way,
Through backward racing seas and caverns of chill spray.

One sentry by the davits, in the gloom
Stands mute; the boat heaves onward through the
night.

Shrouded is every chink of cabined light:
And sluiced by floundering waves that hiss and boom,
And crash like guns, the troop-ship shudders . . . doom.

Now something at my feet stirs with a sigh;
And slowly growing used to groping dark,
I know that the hurricane-deck, down all its length,
Is heaped and spread with lads in sprawling strength,—
Blanketed soldiers sleeping. In the stark
Danger of life at war, they lie so still,
All prostrate and defenceless, head by head . . .
And I remember Arras, and that hill
Where dumb with pain I stumble among the dead.

We are going home. The troop-ship, in a thrill
O fiery-chamber'd anguish, throbs and rolls.
We are going home . . . victims . . . three thousand
souls

Swear You'll Never Forget

By SIEGFRIED SASSOON

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YET?

For the world's events have rumbled on since those
gagged days,

Like traffic checked awhile at the crossing of the ways:
And the haunted gap in your minds has filled with
thoughts that flow

Like clouds in the lit heavens of life; and you are a man
reprieved to go,

Taking your peaceful share of Time, with joy to spare.

BUT THE PAST IS JUST THE SAME—AND WAR'S A
BLOODY GAME . . .

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YET?

LOOK DOWN, AND SWEAR BY THE SLAIN OF THE
WAR THAT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET.

Do you remember the dark months you held the
sector at Mametz—

The nights you watched and wired and dug and piled
sandbags on parapet?

Do you remember the rats, and the stench

Of corpses rotting in front of the front line trench,—

And dawn coming dirty-white, and chill with a hopeless
rain?

DO YOU EVER STOP AND ASK, "IS IT GOING TO
HAPPEN AGAIN?"

Do you remember that hour of din before the attack,—
And the anger, the blind compassion that seized and
shook you then

As you peered at the doomed and haggard faces of the
men?

Do you remember the stretcher cases lurching back
With dying eyes and lolling heads,—those ashen grey
Mask of the lads who once were keen and kind and gay?

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YET?

**LOOK UP AND SWEAR BY THE STARS IN THE SKY
THAT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET.**

Cry of the People

By JOHN G. NEIHARDT

Tremble before your chattels,
Lords of the scheme of things!
Fighters of all earth's battles,
Ours is the might of kings!
Guided by seers and sages,
The world's heart-beat for a drum,
Snapping the chains of ages,
Out of the night we come!

Lend us no ear that pities!
Offer no almoner's hand!
Alms for the builders of cities!
When will you understand?
Down with your pride of birth
And your golden gods of trade!
A man is worth to his mother, Earth,
All that a man has made!

We are the workers and makers!
We are no longer dumb!
Tremble, O Shirkers and Takers!
Sweeping the earth—we come!
Ranked in the world-wide dawn,
Marching into the day!
The night is gone and the sword is drawn
And the scabbard is thrown away!

Out From Siberia

By ALICE CORBIN

I hear the tramp of thousands of men
Coming from prisons and haunts of gloom.
Out from Siberia's living tomb—
Russia greeting her own again.

Oh, this is the happiest army of men
Who fought for freedom with passionate zeal,
A fight more brave than of steel on steel—
Russia welcomes her own again.

The Five-Point Star

By J. S. WALLACE

Dank is the fog that dogs our steps,
The mist that twists in siren shapes,
Edging us on to ledges him
Where Death, expectant, grimly gapes.

Baleful the light, though beautiful,
That leads to those seductive arms
Whose clasp is death and burial
Beneat the bullfrog's late alarms.

Weary of too much travelling,
Wary of leaders who mislead,
We know not how to stay nor start,
Nor to go back, nor to proceed.

Sudden upon the blood stained sky,
Bright like a bayonet afar,
Cleaving the dark, the doubt, the death,
Rises the pilot Five Point Star.

Russia, salute! Not to your lands,
But to your toiling working class
Who broke the spears of all the Czars
Upon their breasts, that we might pass

From haunted days, and hunted ways.
(Poor harried slaves, who breath by stealth!)
Through Revolution's iron gates
To the Industrial Commonwealth!

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