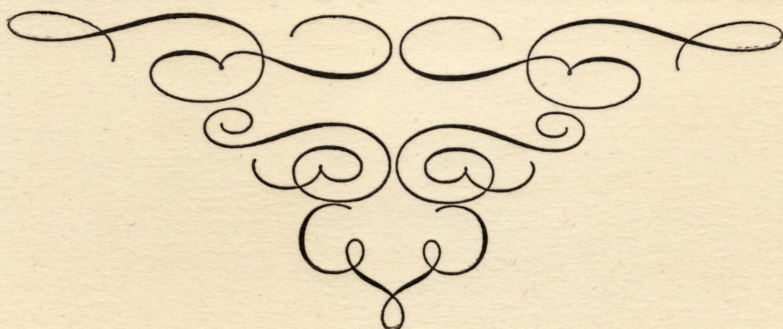


THE FIRST SIGNATURE
SEVEN SONNETS

An occasional magazine devoted to the traditional sonnet. The editor has written the first seven sonnets. Contributions should be accompanied by a stamped, return envelope. As payment, poets will receive five copies of the issue in which their work appears.



Come love, heed not the cries of other men,
My arms encompass all their bold desires
When you lie in my warm embrace. Again
The beast will rage, the melancholy fires
Of ignorance and greed race from their den
To split apart poor lovers. How it tires
My aching soul to see it come, and then
Know well it cannot, as the hour transpires,
Survive. Lie still, the empires quickly fall
No matter what we do. Our warm embrace
Is far more perfect, true, and surely right
Than all the ravings of the mighty. Fall
They must. They run a futile, bloody race.
Love now! The future is a sickly sight.

True love and hatred are the next of kin
And smolder as two fires side by side.
When treachery its malice does begin
Not iron nor steel these fires can divide.
The warm caress, the vengeant blow, both win
Their moment's power, yet both reside
Your helpless, sighing body's soul within
And though the sun burn out, cannot abide
At peace in any man. The warm embrace
Has ended many times in augured pain.
Suspicion's blue-green spears emit in flight
The scattered fragments of an unwatched race.
Unwisely, wisdom heeds not, learns again—
Encountering the painful face of fright.

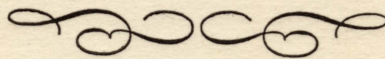
How then does man his inmost values find,
When all the arteries of love incite
The body to ignore the groping mind?
How will the arrows, aimless in their flight
Leave verdant death and agony behind
Yet have the force to speed through space in bright
Array? The heedless archer is not blind —
Deigns not employ the honesty of sight.
Time is the best physician for the poor.
When memory fails the pain cannot survive,
And envy shrivels to a petty hate,
Bold folly trips his lovely paramour
Into suspicion's hairy arms. We strive
As womb-wet babes against the cobra — fate.

And down will fall the cold green stars of fate
Into the small allotted spaces of the earth
Amid the unheard protests of the blind and late,
Amid the feeble sounds of anger. Mirth
Is but a screen for empty minds. The hate
Engendered by the truth reflects the dearth
Of sanity, of wisdom, and the rate
Of rot. Mankind valued far beyond its worth.
Deflect your grudges from the guiltless air;
Wrap mantle close; heed not the stillborn sound.
Cry havoc not to these unknowing, fair
Young children of the thoughtless who abound
In effortless arenas, unaware
As death's sure hand slips firmly 'round.

When on the western sea I cast my gaze,
I see afar the ships of other time.
Fat galleons wallow in the yellow haze
Of distance, and the sleek grey dolphins climb
The curving earthbound sea. The burning days
And starlit nights are filled with song and rhyme.
A pearl-clad mermaid with her tresses plays.
Pirates swagger, scarred and black with crime.
How laden is the world of old romance
With tales and thoughts of ancient golden lore!
So far removed from our destructive age.
Thus we, from mind's-eye world of chance
May yet pursue a twice removed shore
Before the ones who rule us burst their cage.

What shall I offer as a proof of love?
There is no single thing to signify
The endless attitudes. How does one prove
What the world does not allow? How fortify
Against the malcontents, who from above
Cast down dissension? How may we reply
To pleas of eagles strangled by the dove?
What sacrifice will demons pacify?
I'll give the walls of China, and of Rome,
An endless segment of the star-filled sky,
A golden helmet from the sands of Troy,
An island ringed with black and silver foam,
A castle carved from lapis lazuli,—
Will these trinkets your old doubts destroy?

Cry softly now, the treachery at last
Has bared its yellow head for all to see.
Now fades the splendid vision fast
Which stood secure in its own imagery.
Ideals, before this grim iconoclast,
Go down as wreckage to a swollen sea,
Swift borne, destroyed, and keenly lashed
Unto the farthest reach of misery.
Bells toll— birds fall— a condiment of air
Descends. The voices of ones distant friends
Voicing cool platitudes, just out of sight.
Then enter justice, tall and very fair,
Divining all beginnings, causes, ends.
Then enter mockery, astride black night.



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