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GEORGE EBEL

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I N T R O D U C T I O N :

Ebey's philosophy is neither new nor admirable. He is by way of being a hedonist and a cynical one at that. In none of his verse can one find any indication of his belief in either good or evil. For him there exists but the gratification of self. And worse still— he believes that this gratification of self, this catering to the senses, should be the goal of every thinking person.

The past, to George Ebey, means little or less than nothing, and should not be recalled unless one wishes to indulge in a peculiar form of self torture. Over the future there hangs a silent veil that must inevitable be penetrated, but not for awhile. But in the present one has life, which above all interests Ebey.

As the opening sentence went, this type of thinking is neither new nor admirable. Yet out of this dead-end philosophy Ebey has drawn a curious vein of song, a fascinating type of beauty. A beauty of silences, of never-nevers, of forgetfulness, and the exquisite peace of slumber.

(The repetition of the word sleep in the verses presented should be of some significance to a psychologist. I'd like to take an off the record stab to the effect that the business of living seems but an irritant to the poet and sleep with its convenient dulling of the senses interest him as the ideal existence.)

Through the quiet threnody of his verse Ebey spins a golden strand of both wit and cynicism. This is particularly noticable in Invictus II and Rime. But at their most caustic parts the poems remain attractive for their natural delicacy, charm, and refinement of

expression.

George Ebey has experimented with all types of poetry from the rhymed and metered sonnet to free verse. He is an admirer of Carl Sandburg, Vachel Lindsay, Joseph Ruslander, and Elinor Fylie. The latter's influence is apparent in the brittle and scintillating Tear-drops for Sylvia, a tragicomedy in undertones.

The usual, rather than the unusual, intrigues George Ebey. Poems such as Who is the Moon, November Morn, Dark Laughter, and Chaos are simple proof of this. The reason is also simple: Ebey abhors and disdains the shudder-shudder theory that has for so long held fantasy poets in its grasp. He believes that the most customary and expected things—such as night falling, leaves skittering across a street pavement—are inspiration enough for good fantasy or semi-fantasy verse.

This will, presumably, explain to some extent the reason for the publication of this small volume.

-Maliano
Associate editor: DIABLERIE

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dedicated

to

ROBERT V. LOYNDES

THE AWAKENED

I can hardly remember—
So strange it seemed—
Just the faintest, dying ember
Of this Universe I dreamed

Lingers in my brain;
A dull and changeless pain.
There was— "man", the crowning thing
Of all my wild imagining.
And "birds" and "rocks" and "sea" and "air"
And "wars" and "love" and dreams I dare
Not think of: lest I doubt my wit,
And lose my dream because of it.

"And lose my dream . . ." I still remember—
So strange it seemed—
Just the faintest, dying ember
Of this Universe I dreamed.

SHAMBLEAU

Forgotten music . . .
From a pale and wond'rous world
In a dim, forgotten time.
Unheeded tinklings . . .
Echoing down the measured
Tread of aeons. Fey Lilith
Weepings, sorrow blurred.

CHAOS

Dry leaves
On concrete.
Cold, dirty
Concrete.
Whispering . . .
In a lonesome breeze.
And my thoughts,
Like dry leaves,
Whisper
Through my brain.
Swung by a sordid wind—
Bound by no pattern, they
Whisper . . .
And pale image froth
Spawns from the
Lamp-light
To feast upon my mind.

While a bored moon
Sweeps the earth
With flaccid light
My thoughts are
Whispering
Dry leaves.

SUMMER DISCORDS

The hairy griffin
Crouches on his Gorgon mask
And screams stark anguish
To the night.
The hot red night.

Green bats wheel
In the star-speckled ooze.
And muscular maidens
Cavort among the patterns.
The whirling patterns.

Cool moonlight shafts
Through the curdled clouds
Where mad leopards grin
Into the night.
The panting hot-eyed night.

While the spangled tongue of
The dragon lolls, as he courts
His shrinking phoenix in the Chinese brazier.
The glowing red brazier.
The sweating ornate brazier.

Glossy shards of moon
Tinkle on the gritty turf.
And the tawny hills turn
Somersaults in the night.
The hot red night.

WIND SPRITES

Born of the grey wind, we hover aloft.
Then flit to your rooftops, wings muffled and soft.

Perched on your chimneysmoke careful are we
To peer through your window-panes vibrant with glee

List to the pale wind that trips o'er green leaves. . .
List to the wail wind that sifts past your eaves. . .

We ride the pale wind we toss in the gale.
And down round your dwellings we spin our fine veil.

Sly is our laughter at secrets of men:
For naught of the mortals lies out of our ken.

And lo! when the blast of the storm is here. . .
And the driving lash of the rain comes near. . .

Wild round your chimneys we whirl and we spin;
And add our thin cries to the voice of the din!

TEARDROPS FOR SYLVIA

A fragile sound that flaws the breathless night
With splinterings stiletto-like, and thin
As faery wine that corruscates within
Enchanted goblets— bubble-shot and bright
With enigmatic shine. Then— stung cascade
Of glitter-drops that scintillate and snap
From inner fires. Embracing flames that tap
Confused infernoes love and hope have made.

And thus a silver manniken has wept—
Swift, mocking undertones!— a threnody
In diamond. A luscious, flint-hard sea
From which prismatic shimmerings have leapt
To form a jagged, lightning chiseled flood
That slowly pools . . . transmuted into blood.

RIME

Let us pass among the shadows
And watch them in their race
To nowhere. And see a shadow face
Glow lantern bright. His course is at an end.
And he may wheel
Upon his heel
And walk it once again.
Yea, watch the shadows strut their way!
And marvel at the grave
And studied solemnness that fills their shadow day.
Like mimes upon a shifting stage
They pose, posture, and feign
A shadow joy, a shadow rage,
A shadow cry of pain.
Now let us ring the curtain down:
The repertoire is plain.
And no doubt runs forever
In such a shadow vein.
There must be other shadows near
To sing a weary sorrowsong
And shed a shadow tear.

FLICKER

Somewhere we've met
On a hazy plain.
Where purple clouds
Wept silv'ry rain.

The rivers sang
An endless tune
And pale dusk throbbed
About our moon.

Stardust glittered
Bright in your hair.
Please remember . . .
We did meet there.

INVICTUS II

Turn off all the sunshine, God.
Please remove the paper sky.
And banish all these warped, odd
Phantoms that affront my eye.

And after that? Why . . . then I'll keep
A rendezvous with dreamless sleep.
And never wake, to know the tide
Of life that bursts and swells inside.

STASIS

Unchanging, still
 the flowers stand.
Bright-colored,
 soaked in sleep.
The bee's wings form
 a gauzy band
Through which the
 sunbeams seep.

And nothing moves;
 there's none to know
Time's shifting
 sands are run.
The measured minutes
 come and go
No more. Their
 course is done.

IMPRESSION IN ASH

Lost . . .
Down the flick'ring

Abyss of time,

I wander.

Lonely . . .

The grayness

Spreads before me.

Endless . . .

The dull mist

Swirls about me.

Choking . . .

Blurred webs of space

Have meshed above,

Below me.

Lost . . .

DARK LAUGHTER

The dull and languorous gods of sleep
Have settled softly on the land,
And spread a veil of stillness, deep
In frozen hill with numbing hand.

A silence, steeped in drowse and slumber,
Broods cool upon the torpid earth;
Of icy coils in endless number . . .
The sleep gods laugh in sluggish mirth.

WONDER QUESTION

Long leaves, like trailing hands of sleep,
Caress the wind and twine it deep
About the tops
Of Languor Trees.

Cool breeze, whinned soul of fen and hill,
What holds you chainless, soft and still,
About the tops
Of Languor Trees?

VALENTINE

For you . . . the fox fire glow of hidden gems.
And flowers of a most fantastic shape.
Fey whisperings—that ever seek escape
From lands a haunted silent river hems
In spiderwebs of iridescent repe.
For you a torrent of unfettered thought
That glistens with the high capricious sheen
Of radiance half-comprehended. Seen
In forest pools by moonlight: Fancy wrought.
And cabalistic shadows, warped, unclean . . .

For you a talisman in witch blood dipped—
An oddly fashioned thing of crimson hue.
Complexities in crystal spun for you
To clasp and shatter, laughing, languous lipped . . .

NOVEMBER MORN

Etched against a cloud-tossed sky
The eucalyptus bows on high
Its rain drenched head. The sad leaves sigh
A chill lament. The winds sift by . . .

WHO IS THE MOON?

Through the screen of oaktwigs a wistful moon glimmers faintly. Caught in the meshwork of dark green leaves it trails glorymists in my eyes.

I am asleep yet not asleep and when music from the everywhere eddys out into dimness and lulls my senses, the glorymists of the moon en-wrap me in their cold fire and I do not rest.

All about I hear the distant thunder of water.

The water that veils me in cobwebs of pearl. Fold on fold of delicate vapor to deaden the mind and exalt the soul to cloudy noplaces.

And through the vapor peer great, rheumy eyes mirroring thoughts unknowable and wonders of no-time that I shall never see. And I am not content.

All is hushed save for the waterthunder. The laughter of the stars make no sound. Silently the oaks whisper. My thoughts echo and re-echo to sift away into nothingness. There is stillness.

And for this I will pluck the moon from the oaktwigs and imprison it with letters of emerald and flame. And for this it will rest, forever and a day, by my side trailing glorymists in my eyes.

RUNIC

This is no land to bear a human tread—
In leprous floods, the twitching fungi crawl
From feast to feast. The haggard trees let fall
Their virgin blooms into a fluid bed
Of sentient corruption. Attended
By her phantoms, a fallen Lillith sings
To Satan of her Eden journeyings—
This lightless place is peopled by the dead.

Yet I, the living, went this way (the night
Had scored a twisted furrow through my brain;
My feet had left a subtle, spider stain
Upon the rocks) till in my ceaseless flight
The sombre river Lethe came in sight.
I smiled to feel the liquid's numbing bite.

THE DARK ROOM

Where little
 gusts of blackness
 swirl
past high-pitched,
 airy laughter,
and turgid
 shapes supinely
 curl
round veil of
 alabaster.

To view with
 vapid, be-filmed
 eyes
o silent
 screaming creature
whose writhings
 mirror mild
 surprise
on every
 formless feature.

NIGHT DREAMS

The Moon was a silver, titan ball
That skimmed the green and sleeping earth,
And whispered soft, its word'rous call,
Then grinned a grin of silent mirth.

And I awoke and heard that call.
I slipped off couch of down,
And sped through towering, fluted hall.
In Morpheous' drowsy gown.

The Moon, it laughed a careless laugh,
And shouted oft with glee.
I shrieked with joy, in manner daft!
But— O, so silently.

And finally the last bolt burst;
Through open door I flew.
To stand alone, with heart athirst,
Midst flaming drops of dew!

The dew that was the sparkling tears
Of Luna's molten eyes.
Their pearly shimmer checked all fears,
And held me hypnotized.

They glistened with a silver sheen,
An ever changing light.
I listened with attention keen,
Enraptured in the night.

For they sang a song of crystallised mist;
Frosty cascades of stars . . .
And comets by the heaven's kissed;
Fierce thunder-sons of Mars;

-over-

-continued-

Of mysteries beyond our ken,
Beyond the reach of space;
Of secrets that Creation's pen
Has kept in hard-grasped, tight embrace.

A thought crept through my spellbound brain,
And thrilled me, chilled me deep.
Dared I follow in this rain
Of dew drops, or return to sleep?

But lo! the ruddy sun arose,
And with its warm rays banished
The green earth from its slumber clothes.
The dew drops trembled— vanished . . .

RUINS IN AVALON

Spun in uncertain monotonous,
The wonder of the wind appears
To beat upon the heedless stones
In frenzies of forbidden tears.

They loom in silent monument
Against an alien, ochre sky.
Beneath, in obscure tenement,
The shades of fabled ghost kings lie.

FALSETTO

I dreamed you once . . . in some enchanted world.
Through sprays of moon that weaved and curled
In arabesques serene and slow.

Asleep . . . the poppygod has dropped a net
About your pinioned silhouette.
I hear their laughter, soft and low.

Poor dream! A structure spun of tears and ash.
It vanished in a soundless flash.
And that it shall not come again, I know.

1917

Received of the Treasurer of the United States
the sum of \$100.00 for the year 1917

Witness my hand and seal of office
this 1st day of January 1917

Attest my hand and seal of office
this 1st day of January 1917

by watson for fapa