

BY EZRA POUND

ABC OF READING  
THE CANTOS OF EZRA POUND  
THE CLASSIC NOH THEATER OF JAPAN  
COLLECTED EARLY POEMS OF EZRA POUND  
CONFUCIUS (ENGLISH VERSIONS)  
CONFUCIUS (WORLD POETRY ANTHOLOGY)  
CONFESSION TO CUMMINGS (WORLD POETRY ANTHOLOGY)  
DIPLOCHROME-LONDON  
A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS  
ELEKTRA  
EZRA POUND AND DOROTHY SHAKESPEAR 1909-1914  
EZRA POUND AND MUSIC  
EZRA POUND AND THE VISUAL ARTS  
GAUDIER BRZESKA  
GUIDE TO KULCHUR  
LITERARY ESSAYS  
FAMOUS AND DIVAGATIONS  
PERSONAE  
HOW TO TELL THE STORY OF A LITERARY FRIENDSHIP  
LOUISO JOYCE: LETTERS & ESSAYS  
EZRA POUND AND THE LETTERS OF EZRA POUND AND WYNDHAM LEWIS  
POUND / THE LITTLE REVIEW  
EZRA POUND AND CARLOS WILLIAMS: SELECTED LETTERS  
LOUISO JOYCE: SELECTED LETTERS  
SELECTED CANTOS  
SELECTED LETTERS 1907-1941  
SELECTED PROSE 1909-1965  
SELECTED POEMS  
THE SPIRIT OF ROMANCE  
TEMPTATIONS  
THE TOUR OF SOUTHERN FRANCE  
THESEUS (SOPTOKLES)

# EZRA POUND

## SELECTED POEMS

*A New Directions Paperbook*

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Lest love return with the foison sun  
And slay the memories that me cheer  
(Such as I drink to mine fashion)  
Wining the ghosts of yester-year.

Where are the joys my heart had won?  
(*Saturn and Mars to Zeus drawn near!*)<sup>1</sup>  
Where are the lips mine lay upon,  
Aye! where are the glances feat and clear  
That bade my heart his valour don?  
I skoal to the eyes as grey-blown mere  
(Who knows whose was that paragon?)  
Wining the ghosts of yester-year.

Prince: ask me not what I have done  
Nor what God hath that can me cheer  
But ye ask first where the winds be gone  
Wining the ghosts of yester-year.

### THE TREE

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,  
Knowing the truth of things unseen before;  
Of Daphne and the laurel bough  
And that god-feasting couple old  
That grew elm-oak amid the wold.  
'Twas not until the gods had been  
Kindly entreated, and been brought within  
Unto the hearth of their heart's home

<sup>1</sup> *Signum Nativitatis.*

That they might do this wonder thing;  
Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood  
And many a new thing understood  
That was rank folly to my head before.

### THE WHITE STAG

I ha' seen them 'mid the clouds on the heather.  
Lo! they pause not for love nor for sorrow,  
Yet their eyes are as the eyes of a maid to her lover,  
When the white hart breaks his cover  
And the white wind breaks the morn.

*"'Tis the white stag, Fame, we're a-hunting,  
Bid the world's hounds come to horn!"*

### SESTINA: ALTAFORTE

LOCUTUR: *En* Bertrans de Born. Dante Alighieri put this man in hell  
for that he was a stirrer up of strife. Eccovi! Judge ye! Have I dug  
him up again? The scene is at his castle, Altaforte. "Papiols" is his  
jongleur. "The Leopard," the *device* of Richard Cœur de Lion.

I

Damn it all! all this our South stinks peace.  
You whoreson dog, Papiols, come! Let's to music!  
I have no life save when the swords clash.  
But ah! when I see the standards gold, vair, purple, opposing  
And the broad fields beneath them turn crimson,  
Then howl I my heart nigh mad with rejoicing.

## *DANCE FIGURE*

*For the Marriage in Cana of Galilee*

Dark eyed,  
O woman of my dreams,  
Ivory sandaled,  
There is none like thee among the dancers,  
None with swift feet.

I have not found thee in the tents,  
In the broken darkness.  
I have not found thee at the well-head  
Among the women with pitchers.

Thine arms are as a young sapling under the bark;  
Thy face as a river with lights.

White as an almond are thy shoulders;  
As new almonds stripped from the husk.  
They guard thee not with eunuchs;  
Not with bars of copper.

Gilt turquoise and silver are in the place of thy rest.  
A brown robe, with threads of gold woven in patterns, hast  
    thou gathered about thee,  
O Nathat-Ikanaie, "Tree-at-the-river."

As a rillet among the sedge are thy hands upon me;  
Thy fingers a frosted stream.

Thy maidens are white like pebbles;  
Their music about thee!

There is none like thee among the dancers;  
None with swift feet.

## *APRIL*

*Nympharum membra disjecta*

Three spirits came to me  
And drew me apart  
To where the olive boughs  
Lay stripped upon the ground:  
Pale carnage beneath bright mist.

## *THE REST*

O helpless few in my country,  
O remnant enslaved!

Artists broken against her,  
A stray, lost in the villages,  
Mistrusted, spoken-against,

Lovers of beauty, starved,  
Thwarted with systems,  
Helpless against the control;

You who can not wear yourselves out  
By persisting to successes,  
You who can only speak,  
Who can not steel yourselves into reiteration;

### *ALBA*

As cool as the pale wet leaves  
                    of lily-of-the-valley  
She lay beside me in the dawn.

### *COITUS*

The gilded phaloi of the crocuses  
                    are thrusting at the spring air.  
Here is there naught of dead gods  
But a procession of festival,  
A procession, O Giulio Romano,  
Fit for your spirit to dwell in.  
Dione, your nights are upon us.

The dew is upon the leaf.  
The night about us is restless.

### *THE ENCOUNTER*

All the while they were talking the new morality  
Her eyes explored me.  
And when I arose to go  
Her fingers were like the tissue  
Of a Japanese paper napkin.

### *ἸΜΕΡΡΟ*

Thy soul  
Grown delicate with satieties,  
Atthis.  
O Atthis,  
I long for thy lips.  
I long for thy narrow breasts,  
Thou restless, ungathered.

### *TAME CAT*

"It rests me to be among beautiful women.  
Why should one always lie about such matters?  
I repeat:  
It rests me to converse with beautiful women  
Even though we talk nothing but nonsense,

The purring of the invisible antennæ  
Is both stimulating and delightful."

### *THE TEA SHOP*

The girl in the tea shop  
                    Is not so beautiful as she was,  
The August has worn against her.  
She does not get up the stairs so eagerly;  
Yes, she also will turn middle-aged,

That your relationship is wholly parasitic;  
Yet to our feasts you bring neither  
Wit, nor good spirits, nor the pleasing attitudes  
Of discipleship.

### III

But you, *bos amicus*, we keep on,  
For to you we owe a real debt:  
In spite of your obvious flaws,  
You once discovered a moderate chop-house.

### MEDITATIO

When I carefully consider the curious habits of dogs  
I am compelled to conclude  
That man is the superior animal.

When I consider the curious habits of man  
I confess, my friend, I am puzzled.

### CODA

O My songs,  
Why do you look so eagerly and so curiously into people's  
faces,  
Will you find your lost dead among them?

### THE COMING OF WAR: ACTAEON

An image of Lethe,  
and the fields  
Full of faint light  
but golden,  
Gray cliffs,  
and beneath them  
A sea  
Harsher than granite,  
unstill, never ceasing;  
High forms  
with the movement of gods,  
Perilous aspect;  
And one said:  
"This is Actaeon."  
Actaeon of golden greaves!  
Over fair meadows,  
Over the cool face of that field,  
Unstill, ever moving  
Hosts of an ancient people,  
The silent cortège.

### IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
Petals on a wet, black bough.

I have been kind. See, I have left the jars sealed,  
Lest thou shouldst wake and whimper for thy wine.  
And all thy robes I have kept smooth on thee.

O thou unmindful! How should I forget!  
—Even the river many days ago,  
The river? thou wast over young.  
And three souls came upon Thee—  
And I came.  
And I flowed in upon thee, beat them off;  
I have been intimate with thee, known thy ways.  
Have I not touched thy palms and finger-tips,  
Flowed in, and through thee and about thy heels?  
How 'came I in'? Was I not thee and Thee?

And no sun comes to rest me in this place,  
And I am torn against the jagged dark,  
And no light beats upon me, and you say  
No word, day after day.

Oh! I could get me out, despite the marks  
And all their crafty work upon the door,  
Out through the glass-green fields. . . .

\* \* \* \*

Yet it is quiet here:  
I do not go."

#### *PORTRAIT D'UNE FEMME*

Your mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,  
London has swept about you this score years

And bright ships left you this or that in fee:  
Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,  
Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed wares of price.  
Great minds have sought you—lacking someone else.  
You have been second always. Tragical?  
No. You preferred it to the usual thing:  
One dull man, dulling and uxorious,  
One average mind—with one thought less, each year.  
Oh, you are patient, I have seen you sit  
Hours, where something might have floated up.  
And now you pay one. Yes, you richly pay.  
You are a person of some interest, one comes to you  
And takes strange gain away:  
Trophies fished up; some curious suggestion;  
Fact that leads nowhere; and a tale or two,  
Pregnant with mandrakes, or with something else  
That might prove useful and yet never proves,  
That never fits a corner or shows use,  
Or finds its hour upon the loom of days:  
The tarnished, gaudy, wonderful old work;  
Idols and ambergris and rare inlays,  
These are your riches, your great store; and yet  
For all this sea-hoard of deciduous things,  
Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff:  
In the slow float of different light and deep,  
No! there is nothing! In the whole and all,  
Nothing that's quite your own.  
Yet this is you.

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

Asphodel and Other Love Poems  
The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams  
    The Build-up  
    The Collected Poems, Volume I  
    The Collected Poems, Volume II  
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Something to Say: WCW on Younger Poets  
    A Voyage to Pagany  
    White Mule  
The William Carlos Williams Reader  
    Yes, Mrs. Williams

# William Carlos Williams

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## Selected Poems

Edited with an introduction by Charles Tomlinson

A New Directions Book



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Or do you think you can shut grief in?  
What—from us? We who have perhaps  
nothing to lose? Share with us  
share with us—it will be money  
in your pockets.

Go now  
I think you are ready.

### ***El Hombre***

It's a strange courage  
you give me ancient star:

Shine alone in the sunrise  
toward which you lend no part!

### ***Spring Strains***

In a tissue-thin monotone of blue-grey buds  
crowded erect with desire against the sky  
tense blue-grey twigs  
slenderly anchoring them down, drawing  
them in—

two blue-grey birds chasing  
a third struggle in circles, angles,  
swift convergings to a point that bursts  
instantly!

Vibrant bowing limbs  
pull downward, sucking in the sky  
that bulges from behind, plastering itself  
against them in packed rifts, rock blue  
and dirty orange!

But—  
(Hold hard, rigid jointed trees!)  
the blinding and red-edged sun-blur—  
creeping energy, concentrated  
counterforce—welds sky, buds, trees,  
rivets them in one puckering hold!  
Sticks through! Pulls the whole  
counter-pulling mass upward, to the right  
locks even the opaque, not yet defined  
ground in a terrific drag that is  
loosening the very tap-roots!

On a tissue-thin monotone of blue-grey buds  
two blue-grey birds, chasing a third,  
at full cry! Now they are  
flung outward and up—disappearing suddenly!

## *Spring and All*

By the road to the contagious hospital  
under the surge of the blue  
mottled clouds driven from the  
northeast—a cold wind. Beyond, the  
waste of broad, muddy fields  
brown with dried weeds, standing and fallen

patches of standing water  
the scattering of tall trees

All along the road the reddish  
purplish, forked, upstanding, twiggy  
stuff of bushes and small trees  
with dead, brown leaves under them  
leafless vines—

Lifeless in appearance, sluggish  
dazed spring approaches—

They enter the new world naked,  
cold, uncertain of all  
save that they enter. All about them  
the cold, familiar wind—

Now the grass, tomorrow  
the stiff curl of wildcarrot leaf  
One by one objects are defined—  
It quickens: clarity, outline of leaf

But now the stark dignity of  
entrance—Still, the profound change  
has come upon them: rooted, they  
grip down and begin to awaken

### ***The Pot of Flowers***

Pink confused with white  
flowers and flowers reversed  
take and spill the shaded flame  
darting it back  
into the lamp's horn

petals aslant darkened with mauve

red where in whorls  
petal lays its glow upon petal  
round flamegreen throats

petals radiant with transpiercing light  
contending  
above

the leaves  
reaching up their modest green  
from the pot's rim

and there, wholly dark, the pot  
gay with rough moss.

### ***The Farmer***

The farmer in deep thought  
is pacing through the rain  
among his blank fields, with  
hands in pockets,  
in his head  
the harvest already planted.  
A cold wind ruffles the water  
among the browned weeds.  
On all sides  
the world rolls coldly away:  
black orchards  
darkened by the March clouds—  
leaving room for thought.  
Down past the brushwood  
bristling by  
the rainslued wagonroad  
looms the artist figure of  
the farmer—composing  
—antagonist

## The Rose

The rose is obsolete  
but each petal ends in  
an edge, the double facet  
cementing the grooved  
columns of air—The edge  
cuts without cutting  
meets—nothing—renews  
itself in metal or porcelain—

whither? It ends—

But if it ends  
the start is begun  
so that to engage roses  
becomes a geometry—

Sharper, neater, more cutting  
figured in majolica—  
the broken plate  
glazed with a rose

Somewhere the sense  
makes copper roses  
steel roses—

The rose carried weight of love  
but love is at an end—of roses  
It is at the edge of the  
petal that love waits

Crisp, worked to defeat  
laboredness—fragile  
plucked, moist, half-raised  
cold, precise, touching

What

The place between the petal's  
edge and the

From the petal's edge a line starts  
that being of steel  
infinitely fine, infinitely  
rigid penetrates  
the Milky Way  
without contact—lifting  
from it—neither hanging  
nor pushing—

The fragility of the flower  
unbruised  
penetrates space.