

AMY LOWELL

Men, Women and Ghosts. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.

Can Grande's Castle. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.

Pictures of the Floating World. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.

Amy Lowell is a poet of amazing range, and a brilliant critic. Her colorful lyrics, her impassioned dramatic poems, her delicate adaptations of Chinese translations, and her swinging polyphonic prose, make her one of the most versatile of American writers; but this virtuosity does not limit her importance in each field which she enters. Her experiments have not dimmed her accomplishment.

A distant relative of James Russell Lowell, a sister of President Lowell of Harvard and of the astronomer Percival Lowell, Amy Lowell was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1874. She was educated in private schools, and traveled much in Europe. About twenty years ago she decided to devote her life to poetry. For years she had been writing, but was not satisfied with the result. Miss Lowell is one of those writers who develop late. After a long preparation, her first poem appeared in "The Atlantic" in 1910. Since then her life has been an exceedingly active one. She works harder at her craft than do most bank presidents at their offices. Her efforts to aid young poets are unsparing and her critical ability has been of inestimable assistance, both in print and by conferences, in aiding the development of American letters during the last decade. A striking personality, the fact that she reads her poems superbly, and a forceful platform manner have made her lecture tours most successful. She is at present hard at work on a life of Keats and

her collection of Kents manuscripts is probably the largest in the world. As honest in her speech as she is in her art, she has been and continues to be perhaps the most vivid influence in the development of American poetics.

"It is plain that Miss Lowell's range is the most obvious of her gifts. But it is not the greatest; she strikes single notes as sharply as she can sound large, experimental chords. When her collected works are some day appraised in a complete study of American poetry, it will be found that her vigor, matching her versatility, will have expressed the poet that is half-singer, half-scientist, and the groping, experimental period she helped represent."—*Louis Untermeyer in "The New Era in American Poetry"*.

"No one can rightly evaluate Miss Lowell's work who will not accept the fact that she is always a conscious artist. She goes far afield, sometimes, for the materials of her poems. But she selects them with care. She uses the lives of people who live on New England farms today, or the lives of quaint swashbucklers who lived a century ago and half a world away. She shows pictures of strange and vivid things that she has seen in a wide and vivid world. She makes these pictures out of the juxtaposition of odd trifles with scents and hues and textures that she likes. And in her best work she gives us frosty designs in thought as clear as glass, flashing patterns of feeling as warmly colored as glossy skeins of embroidery silk—blue and purple and scarlet, silver and gold. She distills sensations that sting like fiery liqueur. She threads together impressions as frail as a flutter of old lace. She is a poet of vigorous, penetrative and incessantly communicative imagination."—*Marguerite Wilkinson in "New Voices"*.

"The technique of these poems is that of the true modernist. The poet perceives the world keenly and sensitively: she presents it objectively to the reader. All the overtones

of deep feeling, that *sine qua non* of poetry, are present, but they do not crowd into the poems in blurred comments and moralistic tag-endings. The poems are distinct and brilliant in their presentation of surfaces: but it is a dull reader indeed who does not feel the surge of emotion beneath. . . . Miss Lowell's career has been a steady rise, each volume holding old friends and winning new, and there is no sign that the crest has yet been reached."—*Royall H. Snow in "Amy Lowell, Sketches Biographical and Critical"*.

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