

OLD WHARVES

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

FORESTED coverts or flowering heights
That overlook great waters take their charm
From gods whose lounging laughter through the nights
Still leave the grasses warm.
The shadowy flutter of mid-April lights
Mark their departure; and the music sent
From undiscovered places is the sound
Of the way they went.
And every magic of water or of ground
With its own gods is immanent.

And all places where men have been
Have taken the quality of the mood
And spirit that they were gathered in.
By hearths of clubs where men have stood;
In offices where talk was loud,
Or confident, and where bad or good
Was counseled, happy or evil browed;
There you may sense the memorial scales
Flecked from the wings of thought,
And which are drifting, and betray the trails
Of moods or treasures sought. . . .

But where was labor and the boisterous call
Of daily toil for bread,
There brood the memories magical,
There the fraternal gods have sped
The spirits of communal dreams.
Old wharves of fishing towns;
Old piers of once productive streams,
Leaning amid the greens and browns
Of slow decay retain the essences

Of laboring arms and weather-beaten cheeks.
No charm is greater than the undulate docks
Of Northport, Michigan, where the inlet seeks
The roaring lake; none than the sea-aged rocks
Of Portland where the sailing ships
Once loaded, nor where now the sea-gull flocks
By Westport and its river slips.
New Orleans and St. Louis where the slave
Sang at his task and laughed, still keep
The spirits of life lived close to life:
Their wharves are sleepers smiling in their sleep,
Remembering not the waking strife.

Whatever race or tongue
Were those who sailed or fished or wheeled,
The hardy old, the tireless young,
They spent their days here and unsealed
Their lives here to the full, and toiling poured
The savor of realest being to the yield
Of memory on every foot-worn board.
They have become as spirits who haunt
The wonder nooks of nature, nor are they less,
Who amid peril and the goad of want
Here toiled abiding Fate,
And left intangible presences to express
Their songs and calls of happiness,
Their patience which made and fed the State.

THE BOGY OF SEX

Life Is a Conclusive Denial That Sex Is a Central Interest

DAVID SEABURY

THE days of romance have passed. Love no longer hides in a tower room, wooed by music from afar. Love drives down Main Street in chummy roadsters and sits cross-legged on tea-room verandas. Neither is it blind nor shy nor tongue-tied. But in this realistic age the quest is limited. Young love shuns sentiment, it turns its eyes from beauty, singing few songs. The generation has but a single motto, "Male and female created He them."

The new emotionalism is not one of place or social level. It pursues us wherever we turn. Nor is the change confined to the less cultured classes or to the adolescent generation. Even as elderly women have bobbed their hair and given their knees the freedom of the city, so have they at the same time joined the ranks of the unblushing. Many a grandfather these days reads wistfully of glandular therapy. He has sympathy with Faust. The subject of sex has certainly stepped out of the boudoir, thrown off the hushed intimacy of the afternoon knitting, forgotten the privacy of marriage and taken its place at bridge table and club lounge. From three to three score and ten any aspect of it serves for casual reference or minute dissection.

Picture a parlor-grown Victorian with her mind, like her neck, wrists and ankles swathed in the tight conventions of modesty, overhearing two flappers discussing Freud. Their free use of ideas once hardly whispered, would be as horrifying to that ancient lady as their swinging pink legs or the cigarette ashes falling over their alleged dresses. Ladies of bygone days would have blushed deep maroon even to think the thoughts the present generation banter about as nonchalantly as it mentions shoe-strings or the latest dance. And each year conversation takes off another garment, as it were. We are in an age when the word "sacred" has gone back to the altar and there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed.

The more surprising part of it is the prevailing new attitude. At various times in history sex has been moralized about in contrasting lights. In one day it was something to shun, except as an unfortunate necessity for the continuance of the race. At another it became the most beautiful of secrets only to be whispered about. Not so long ago mothers tremblingly told their young the facts of life in an allegory of butterflies and pollen. Nowadays by the age of seven most children are sophisticated. When