

## V E R S E

## Ebb-Tide

The sea-path dizzies to the sea  
 With shimmering gold and glimmering shadow;  
 The lambs breathe deep and patiently  
 In the warm meadow:  
 I will go over the meadow, I will go down to the sea.

The water sags on mellowed rocks,  
 The sand talks faintly in the caves;  
 Somewhere the hand of silence knocks  
 On seagulls' graves:  
 I will go into the caves, I will go out to the rocks.

The seagulls mew incessantly;  
 The lambs in slow white circles crop;  
 The sea-path dizzies to the sea;  
 The tides drop:  
 I will come over the meadow, I will come up from the sea.

JOSEPH AUSLANDER.

## The Fawn in the Snow

The brown-dappled fawn  
 Bereft of the doe  
 Shivers in blue shadow  
 Of the glaring snow,

His whole world bright  
 As a jewel, and hard,  
 Diamond white,  
 Turquoise barred.

The trees are black,  
 Their needles gold,  
 Their boughs crack  
 In the keen cold.

The brown-dappled fawn  
 Bereft of the doe  
 Trembles and shudders  
 At the bright snow.

The air whets  
 The warm throat,  
 The frost frets  
 At the smooth coat.

Brown agate eyes  
 Opened round  
 Agonize  
 At the cold ground,

At the cold heaven  
 Enamelled pale,  
 At the earth shriven  
 By the snowy gale,

At the magic glitter  
 Burning to blind,  
 At beauty bitter  
 As an almond rind.

Fawn, fawn  
 Seek for your south,  
 For flushed dawn  
 With her warm mouth,

For green sod  
 With gold and blue  
 Dappled, as God  
 Has dappled you,

For slumberous ease,  
 Firm turf to run  
 Through fruited trees  
 Into full sun!

The shivering fawn  
 Paws at the snow.  
 South and dawn  
 Lie below;

Richness and mirth,  
 Dearth forgiven,  
 A happy earth,  
 A warm heaven.

The sleet streams,  
 The snow flies;  
 The fawn dreams  
 With wide brown eyes.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

## Statue and Birds

Here, in the withered arbor, like the arrested wind,  
 Straight sides, carven knees,  
 Stands the statue, with hands flung out in alarm  
 Or remonstrances.

Over the lintel sway the woven bracts of the vine  
 In a pattern of angles.  
 The quill of the fountains falters; woods rake on the sky  
 Their brusque tangles.

The birds walk by slowly, circling the marble girl,  
 The golden quails,  
 The pheasants, closed up in their arrowy wings,  
 Dragging their sharp tails.

The inquietudes of the sap and of the blood are spent;  
 What is forsaken will rest.  
 But her heel is lifted,—she would flee,—the whistle of the  
                   birds  
 Fails on her breast.

LOUISE BOGAN.

## Rouge et Noir

*The Truth about Blayds, by A. A. Milne. The Booth Theatre, March 14, 1922.*

*Madame Pierre, adapted from Eugène Brieux's comedy, Les Hanneçons, by Arthur Hornblow, Jr. The Ritz Theatre, February 15, 1922.*

MR. NORMAN-BEL GEDDES has given *The Truth about Blayds* a remarkable setting, a high drawing-room in varied blues, almost sentimental but based on very solid and dignified architecture. And that is exactly what the life and the people there turn out to be, old Blayds himself especially, who is weak, sentimental but—as they say in the lines—with a quality. In this room the play begins well, a little slowly at the start but full of the promise of that comedy note that English dramatists know how to get, that sense of a rambling and secure philosophy, the flavor and background of a social point-of-view.

Blayds, nearing a hundred now and famous for two generations as a poet, is the centre of the living in this house. Every word of his is set down, the world revolves about him. And now it is this great man's birthday and the younger authors of England have sent to add their tribute to the rest. Then Blayds in his armchair is rolled into the room; and though, as a matter of fact, he is carried from that moment by Mr. Heggie's remarkable performance entirely out of the room and beyond the play, we can see from his lines that he is really a person, a charming, distinguished figure. Most of the tyranny, then, and the air of folly in the house springs from the minds of the others there. What a chance for comedy!

But, alas, at this point Isobel meets Mr. Royce who—conveyed himself by the dry quietude of Mr. Gilbert Emery's acting—has come to convey the salutations of England's younger authors to England's great poet. The two have met before, and Isobel had never wedded him because her father needed her. And now at last they stand face to face again. An ominous silence then, a sacred hush. And British sentiment quietly breaks loose in our midst. Not much at first, just a few reticent and sweetish odds and ends that are only slightly disconcerting. But a moment, however, and we see clearly that the two are on their way. Love knots get into their brains. The hedgerows and the May, the long years, the might-have-beens; from this on Aunt Isobel and Mr. Royce mean to talk drivel, you can see that. The play goes ahead, fine comedy material with delightful contriving. Old Blayds dies, and Isobel comes to tell the family the secret he has told her that last day. The poems were not all his, only that one failure of a volume in '63; they had been left by a friend who had been dead these many years and had willed the poems to Blayds. And here were the laurels; here was the family, distinguished on Blayds' account; here was the son-in-law—whose portrait Mr. Gottschalk does with such exquisite finish and irony—ready to out-Boswell Boswell over his great father-in-law; what a comedy now of evasion, people believing what they want to believe; inexhaustible stores of humor for Mr. Milne, and filled by him with delicious turns and crochets. And yet the while sweets to the sweet. Isobel and her romance will gum up the wheels from this on to the very end. The last word is to be hers. And in the meantime several hundred words are hers right there in the second act; words so bad, so shameless and so maudlin

that not even her earlier sweetness has prepared us for them; words that make us squirm for sheer embarrassment and wonder where to look. "I might have had a little girl to be my friend, and we could have had secrets together about my man, our man: we could have had secrets together about his dear, foolish, manlike ways. Ah, how we would have spoilt our man, my little girl and I. He asked me to marry him and I didn't. I sent him away. I said—" and so on and on and on, hands at the sides, penserosa, with the tremolo and the voix céleste always out. And finally, "Ah, how happy we could have made our man, my little girl and I." In the last act it gets worse, for then everything has got to be settled, love needs the whole floor. Mr. Royce stands and plays with the moment. He knows quite well that after a while he will take his hands out of his manlike quiet pockets and fold her to his breast. The woman he has loved is dead and lives now in this daughter, or the daughter lives in her, and both or whichever you like is Isobel now, will she come with him? But how can she? He must be playful. He introduces one woman to the other, he is as analytical as Hiawatha's mittens with the skinside inside outside and the furside outside inside; and he thinks quite seriously that she will be happy perhaps when the primroses are out and the birds are busy.

After that of course all is well. But this is the kind of thing, nevertheless, that teaches us to value the actor's self-control in getting such stuff said and done with. And it illustrates for us the kind of sentimental drivel that thrives in Great Britain! How full of ringlet curls it is, of sashes, and silly affectation! Saccharinity, avoidance of the point, diffused sex, and unordered intelligence! No wonder Continentals are puzzled by the London stage, by this willingness to falsify, to slip and slop inanities, to welter in treacle. I remember some of those nobly cynical and distinguished brains in London. What do they think of this? But whatever they may think, they have little to say about it. How much, I wonder, do they really mind? If a man's wife calls him Prince Charming twice in public, whose fault must it be?

On the other hand at the Ritz there was *Madame Pierre*, with Miss Estelle Winwood bringing to her part an astonishing flexibility and technical facility, a secure and careless sincerity, and an effect of wit that shot the rôle beyond Brieux himself very likely. And Mr. Roland Young, with the same wit and intelligence, technique and security, an encouragement to watch. In this play the professor, somewhere around forty, has a friend living with him, a little rascal who is a perpetual nuisance to him but without whom he is unable to exist. She cares nothing for his ferns. He cares less for her former friends. And so they fight it out, every day a battle. But they love each other nevertheless. It is always more and more difficult; Charlotte has nothing to do and nobody to see. Pierre is sick of her humors and her rows. Finally a grand upheaval about ferns, excursions and infidelity—Charlotte has been false to Pierre with an old friend of his, not because she loved the man but because he was so amusing, he could make a noise like a locomotive—and Charlotte departs. In the third act she pretends to drown herself; and Pierre, though he has rejoiced in his freedom, takes her back.

*Madame Pierre* was soon over; and for two reasons, I think. First, the last act was tedious more or less and uninventive, with Pierre boasting about and all of us knowing that Charlotte would return. The foreignness of the French mind was the other reason for the failure.