CAXTONIAN

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Collecting Isaac Rosenberg

R. Eden Martin

When we think of the World War I poets, the names that most readily come to mind might be Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon – maybe Edward Thomas or Ivor Gurney. The name Isaac Rosenberg is not as familiar to most readers. Yet he was perhaps the best of them all. He was certainly one of the greatest natural poetic talents of the period; and some literary experts say he is one of the greatest poets who wrote in English during the twentieth century.

Paul Fussell wrote one of my two favorite books about the literature of World War I: *The Great War and Modern Memory (Oxford 1975)*. In it Fussell expressed his judgment that Rosenberg's poem, "Dead Man's Dump," was one of the best poems of the War. But he liked Rosenberg's "Break of Day in the Trenches" even more – calling it the "most sophisticated poem of the war" and also "the greatest poem of the war."[1]

Isaac Rosenberg, Fall 1917

Bernard Bergonzi, author of *Heroes' Twilight (New York 1966)*, my second favorite book about the literature of the War, was only slightly less enthusiastic. He called Rosenberg "undoubtedly one of the finest poets that the Great War produced";[2] and added:

> Rosenberg's finest poem, and his most complete crystallization of war experience, is without doubt "Dead Man's Dump"; A. Alvarez has described it as the greatest poem by an Englishman to have been produced by the War, and I am inclined to agree.[3]

Isaac Rosenberg was born in 1890 in Bristol, the son of Lithuanian Jews who had emigrated from Russia to England in the 1880's.[4] The family was impoverished. Isaac's father scratched out a meager living as a peddler, and was away from home for long periods. His mother took in boarders and did needlework. In 1897, when Isaac was 7 years old, the family moved to London, settling in the Jewish quarter in the eastern part of the city.

From the age of 7 to 14, Isaac attended a nearby school, where he reportedly was a weak student and was frequently absent. He apparently never learned enough Hebrew to use it in his writing, and he was bored by the worship services. But he was fascinated by the stories of the Old Testament. He also exhibited great skill in drawing and a talent for writing poems.

At the age of 14, Isaac left school to work for an engraving firm – work he hated because it left him little time for drawing or reading. He enrolled in evening painting classes during 1907-08 and continued to compose poetry, which his biographer characterized as "typical outpourings of a young mind, undisciplined, untrained, highly imitative of the Romantic poets."[5]

Though intellectually self confident and ambitious, Isaac was intensely shy. By the time he had reached the age of 21 – in 1911 – he had only a few close friends. One was John Amschewitz – eight years his senior, and later a well-known London painter.[6] The Amschewitz family was well off – unlike the Rosenbergs – and occasionally bought embroidery work from Isaac's mother as a way of providing financial assistance. John Amschewitz also introduced Isaac to influential people who might help him by buying paintings or covering his tuition fees.

In 1911 Isaac made two important friends: Joseph Leftwich, later a well-known writer and journalist; and John Rodker, later a novelist and the publisher of important works of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. They recognized Isaac's talent as a writer, encouraged him to continue to write poetry, and helped open up the world of literary possibilities.

Also in 1911, Isaac was admitted to the Slade School – a part of the Department of Fine Arts at the University of London, where he

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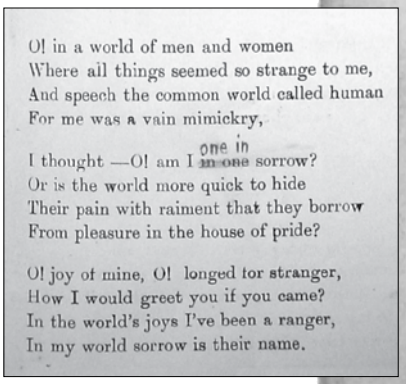
ISAAC ROSENBERG, *from* studied drawing and painting for three years until 1914. During this period, Isaac was desperately poor. He had no job and no assistance from his destitute parents. He apparently survived on the little help received from sympathetic Jewish patrons. While he attended the Slade School, Isaac continued to write in his spare time – mostly prose pieces about painting but also some poetry.

ABOVE *Narodiczky Print Shop, London.* RIGHT *Title Page, Night and Day.* INSET *Example of Rosenberg's penciled changes.*

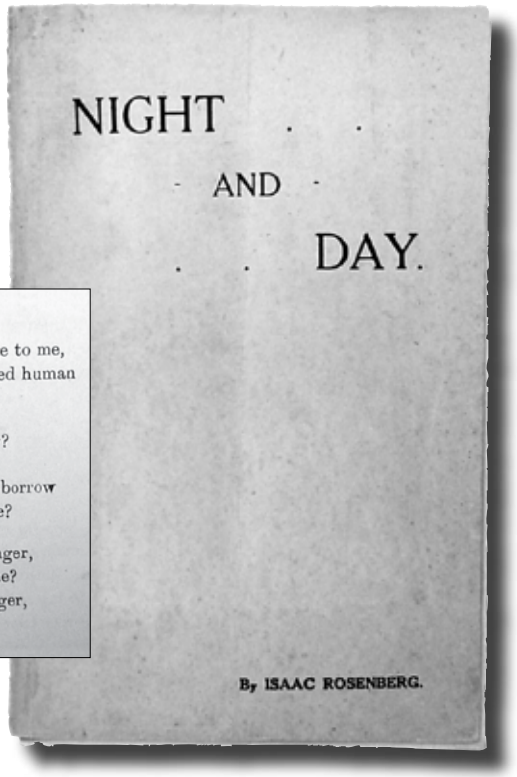
One of the people he met in the course of what we might today call "networking" was Laurence Binyon, a poet and critic then working at the British Museum. Binyon was later considered one of the "war poets" though he was himself a hospital orderly – not a soldier.

Rosenberg still had not decided whether he wanted to be a painter or a poet. He told Binyon around this time, "I spend most of my time drawing. I find writing interferes with drawing a good deal, and is far more exhausting."[7]


O! in a world of men and women
Where all things seemed so strange to me,
And speech the common world called human
For me was a vain mimickry,

I thought —O! am I ~~in one~~ one in sorrow?
Or is the world more quick to hide
Their pain with raiment that they borrow
From pleasure in the house of pride?

O! joy of mine, O! longed for stranger,
How I would greet you if you came?
In the world's joys I've been a ranger,
In my world sorrow is their name.


NIGHT
AND
DAY.
By ISAAC ROSENBERG.

Binyon was the first important literary figure to take Rosenberg seriously, for which he deserves great credit. He later wrote a memoir of his first meeting with Isaac in 1912 which was published in Rosenberg's first major collection of poems, published in 1922 after the War. In his memoir, Binyon described Isaac this way:

> Small in stature, dark, bright-eyed, thoroughly Jewish in type…a boy with an unusual mixture of self-reliance and modesty…. One found in talk how strangely little of second-hand (in one of his age) there was in his opinions, how fresh a mind he brought to what he saw and read.[8]

About the same time as his meeting with Binyon in 1912, the idea occurred to Isaac that he might more successfully attract attention and support if he could give people a sample of his poetry. He may also have hoped to make a little money by selling a few copies. In any event, he sorted through his accumulated manuscripts and selected ten poems – including a sonnet dedicated to his friend, John Amschewitz, and a longer one he had just completed called "Night and Day."

Isaac knew no magazine would publish a poem that ran 370 lines, so he took the manuscript to a friend who worked for a nearby print shop, owned by Israel Narodiczky – a Zionist and printer of Yiddish, Hebrew and anarchistic tracts. Narodiczky agreed to print 50 or so copies of what turned out to be a 24-page pamphlet for a cost of two pounds. Rosenberg had to borrow the money from a friend. The little booklet was given the title *Night and Day*,

the same title as the long, lead poem.

When Isaac received his 50 copies, he found a few mistakes, which he fixed by making penciled changes. He sent some copies to editors, gave a few to his family and friends, and offered the remaining ones for sale. There is no evidence that any copies were sold – at least, not at the time.

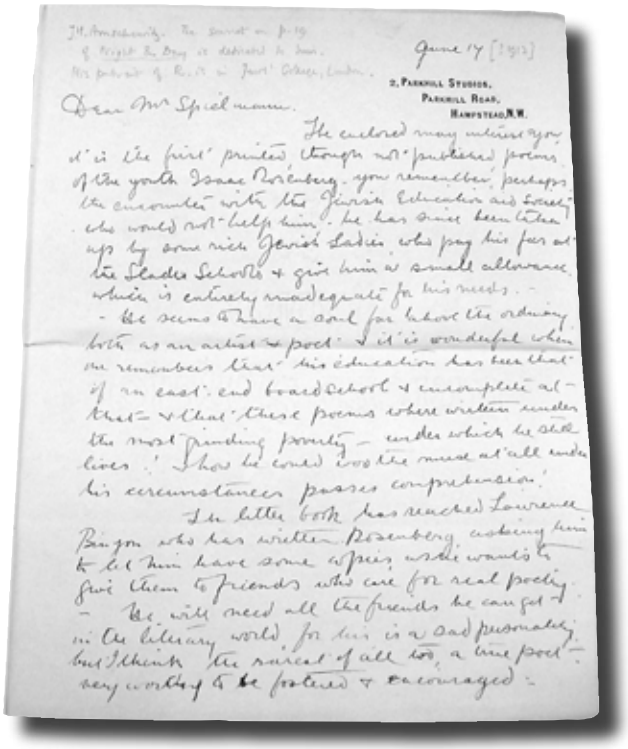
Professor Cohen wrote that it was unlikely that the printer produced anything else that year "as valuable as *Night and Day*, so rare now that the whereabouts of *only one copy* is known." (Emphasis supplied.) This single copy was the one Professor Cohen himself owned.[9] It had previously belonged to Rosenberg's new friend Laurence Binyon, whose wife had at some point passed it on to Cohen. That copy was one of the books in Cohen's great collection of World War I materials that he gave to the University of South Carolina.

In the over 30 years since Cohen published his biography, a few other copies of *Night and Day* have turned up. OCLC reports only the Binyon/Cohen copy now at South Carolina; but we know there are copies at the Bodleian and the Beinecke libraries as well. A fourth copy, as of November 2002, was reportedly being appraised for transfer to a major library. It is now in the Pierpont Morgan Library.

A fifth copy – the only one (I thought) in private hands – is the Spielmann copy, which I acquired several years ago from Julian Rota, the distinguished London book dealer.

(As I was editing this piece for the *Caxtonian*, I learned of a sixth copy that reportedly turned up in Scotland at the Provincial Booksellers Association Valuation Day a couple of years ago. In May 2007 I was contacted by Mr. Rota, who offered a copy which Rosenberg had inscribed in June 1912 to a London social worker named Jeanne Berman. This copy had remained in her family until recently. It is apparently – but not certainly – the copy that turned up at the PBAV Day event. It seemed to me that there was no point in trying to corner the market, so I declined Rota's offer.)

On June 14, 1912, shortly after Rosenberg received his 50 copies from the printer, his friend John Amschewitz sent the copy which is now mine to Harry Alexander Spielmann, an art critic and historian. In his covering letter Amschewitz wrote that Isaac had "been taken up by some rich Jewish ladies who pay his fees at the Slade School and give him a small allowance, which is entirely inadequate for his needs." Amschewitz added that "these poems were written under the most grinding poverty – under which he [Isaac] still lives." He closed his letter as follows:



June 14 [1912]

2, Parkhill Studios,
Parkhill Road,
Hampstead, N.W.

Dear Mr Spielmann.

He enclosed may interest you
it is the first printed though not published poems
of the youth Isaac Rosenberg. you remember perhaps
the encounter with the Jewish Education Aid Society
who would not help him. he has since been taken
up by some rich Jewish ladies who pay his fees at
the Slade School & give him a small allowance
which is entirely inadequate for his needs. -
- he seems to have a soul for above the ordinary
both as an artist & poet. & it is wonderful when
one remembers that his education has been that
of an east-end board school & incomplete at
that - & that these poems where written under
the most grinding poverty - under which he still
lives. How he could write must at all events
his circumstances passes comprehension.

In letter both has reached Laurence
Binyon who has written Rosenberg asking him
to let him have some of his work & wants to
show them to friends who care for real poetry
- He will need all the friends he can get
in the literary world, for his is a sad personality
but I think the rarest of all too, a true poet -
very worthy to be fostered & encouraged.

Letter from John Amschewitz to Harry Spielmann about Rosenberg.

> He will need all the friends he can get in the literary world, for his is a sad personality, but I think the rarest of all too, a true poet – very worthy to be fostered and encouraged.

We do not know whether the Spielmanns made a contribution to Rosenberg. But Mrs. Spielmann saved their copy of *Night and Day*, which later passed into the hands of the distinguished English collector Simon Nowell-Smith. Smith produced a very limited-edition facsimile, using this copy, about 1979. The original remained in his collection until it was sold after his death and found its way to me.

The letter from Amschewitz to the Spielmanns was kept with the Spielmann's copy of the book. It is a particularly nice letter because it contains important biographical information and because of Amschewitz's close association with Rosenberg.

Unfortunately, publication of *Night and Day* did not do much to strengthen either Rosenberg's reputation or his liquidity. He continued to write poetry, to study at the Slade, and to work intermittently on a few paintings. Through carelessness, he spoiled one major painting and wrecked his relationship with one of his few financial supporters. The local Jewish Educational Aid society made him a small grant, which enabled him to continue his studies at the Slade until 1914. Despite the aid, Cohen reports that he made little progress either as a painter or as a poet during 1913.

In late 1913 Rosenberg met Edward Marsh, a classical scholar and editor of the five anthologies of *Georgian Poetry* which appeared from 1912 to 1922. "Eddie" Marsh, Winston Churchill's private secretary during the War, was a supporter of young poets and artists. Rupert Brooke had given him the idea of preparing an anthology of new English verse that would break from the Victorian past. The first of these anthologies had been published in late 1912 by Harold Monro and The Poetry Bookshop, which opened that year in Bloomsbury near the British Museum and quickly became a central meeting place for English poets.

Rosenberg took advantage of his contact with Marsh and sent him copies of his poems, inviting criticism. Marsh, in return, gave him a little advice – and, perhaps more important, bought one of his paintings. But Marsh was too much a traditionalist, and did not appreciate the quality of Rosenberg's poems. Also, Marsh could not give him much time or attention as he was working with his friend Churchill in the Admiralty, preparing the Navy for a war that was only a few months away.

In June 1914, apparently because of his poor health and perhaps to earn money through painting, Rosenberg packed his few belongings and took a ship to South Africa, intending to stay with his sister and her husband. During the trip and after his arrival in Cape Town, he continued to write – and also to paint and to give lectures on painting. Within a few days of his arrival in Cape Town in late June, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was assassinated in Sarajevo. The Austrians, backed by Kaiser Wilhelm, delivered their ultimatum to the Serbs, and the machinery of treaties and mobilization schedules soon clanked into gear.

In August 1914 Rosenberg wrote his first "war poem" – "On Receiving News of the War." It is in many of the anthologies. Unlike poems written by others during the early months of the war – for example, Rupert Brooke and Julian Grenfell – Rosenberg's poem avoided the patriotic sentimentality associated with brave soldiers heading off to fight for their

See ***ISAAC ROSENBERG****, page 4*

ISAAC ROSENBERG, *from page 3*

country. Brooke had started his great poem with these lines:

> If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is for ever England.
> ("The Soldier.")

Rosenberg characterized Brooke's war poems as "begloried sonnets." [10] His view of the reality of war was more detached; perhaps he foresaw its catastrophic nature more clearly:

> Snow is a strange white word.
> No ice or frost
> Has asked of bud or bird
> For Winter's cost.
> # # #
> Red fangs have torn His face.
> God's blood is shed.
> He mourns from His lone place
> His children dead.
> O! ancient crimson curse!
> Corrode, consume.
> Give back this universe
> Its pristine bloom.
> ("On Receiving News of the War.")

For whatever reason, Rosenberg's stay in South Africa was short. In March 1915 he returned to London. He seems always to have been careless about things. This time, he tied up his new paintings and drawings clumsily, and most were lost overboard as his ship was leaving Cape Town.

Despite the war, Isaac found little changed in London, and it was difficult for him to get his work published.

Three of his short poems were included in monthly issues of a coffee-table-style art magazine named *Colour* in the summer of 1915. A few years ago I purchased these art magazines from an English art book dealer, who perhaps did not care – or more likely did not know – that they contained Rosenberg's poems. The third of these[11] was entitled "Wedded." Ian Parsons called it "perhaps the best, and certainly the most technically accomplished" of his poems – and "surely one of the most humanly revealing and moving poems of this kind ever written."[12]

Sometime in the spring of 1915, Isaac decided to produce another little pamphlet of poetry, which he entitled *Youth*. He persuaded the printer, Narodiczky, to print 100 copies of an 18-page booklet for 2 pounds 1 shilling. This time, instead of borrowing Isaac raised the money by selling three of his drawings to Eddie Marsh. Six of the poems in the new book were reprinted from the earlier volume, *Night and Day*. Oddly, Rosenberg chose not to include his first "war poem" – on "Receiving News of the War." Of the 100 or so copies, he managed to sell ten for half a crown each. The others he gave to friends or sent to literary people and potential supporters.

Today, *Youth* is not nearly as rare as *Night and Day*. Although only 12 libraries report having copies, several are available on AbeBooks.com.

Rosenberg scattered copies of *Youth* among his literary friends and contacts. He sent one to Marsh and another to Ezra Pound, along with some poems in manuscript. Pound at that time was giving advice to Harriet Monroe here in Chicago as she endeavored to get her new *Poetry Magazine* off the ground. When Pound sent Ms. Monroe a batch of new material at the end of June 1915, he included a copy of *Youth*, but without a recommendation. He told her, "Don't bother about Rosenberg, send the stuff back to him direct unless it amuses you." Pound did, however, urge her to publish the poems of a young American transplant to London named T.S. Eliot, whom Pound said was "vigorous" and would "go a long way."

Harriet Monroe did not know what to do with the Rosenberg material, so she wrote again to Pound asking for advice. In August Pound responded:

> I think you may as well give this poor devil a show. Yeats called him to my attention last winter, but I have waited. I think you might do half a page review of his book, and that he is worth a page for verse.[13]

Pound added:

> He has something in him, horribly rough but then 'Stepney' East.... We ought to have a real burglar...ma che!!!

For whatever reason, Harriet Monroe decided *not* to "give the poor devil a show." *Youth* was not reviewed in *Poetry;* and none of Rosenberg's poems appeared in the magazine that year.

Rosenberg spent the summer and fall of 1915 in a deep funk. His poverty was oppressive. His poems were receiving little attention. He had no job, and was sponging off his friends, like Marsh, whose patience was running out. Not wishing to be a burden on his parents, and without hope or options, Rosenberg joined the army in October 1915. He arranged for half of his pay to be sent to his Mother as a "separation allowance."

August, 1915 COLOUR 7

"THE SWANS" (See Page 25) By Maurice Langaskens (Belgian Prisoner in Germany)

going to discuss it with you any longer; into the fire you go!' 'God of Things as They ought to be!' Ha! that's the limit! Why don't you act up to it, instead of sitting there, grinning and sneering?' 'God of Things as They ought to be!'"

"Of course, that isn't my real inscription," said the Billiken quietly.

"What is it, then?" asked the man.

"Ah!" said the Billiken, grinning more than ever. "That's what makes me laugh so!"

"Well, what is it?" repeated the man.

"I'm sitting on the real inscription!" laughed the Billiken.

"Well, tell me what it is!" said the man.

"After all, I don't think you've got sufficient imagination to appreciate it, if I told you," jeered the Billiken.

"That's done it!" said the man. "Into the fire you go!"

He flung the little god into the fire, hard. The Billiken struck the top bar of the grate, and the top half of him flew off, and reposed on its back amongst the ashes of burnt letters, grinning cheerfully. The pedestal dropped back again into the lender with a clatter.

"He said he was sitting on it," murmured the man to himself. "I wonder?"

He picked up the broken pedestal and looked at it carefully. On the top of it, where the Billiken had been sitting, he managed to decipher the following inscription:

"The God of Things as They are."

"I can't see any more sense in that than the other one," he said savagely, as he flung it into the fire.

But then, of course, as the Billiken had said, he really had very little imagination.

HUGH E. WRIGHT.

WEDDED

They leave their love-lorn haunts,
Their sigh-warm floating Eden;
And they are mute at once;
Mortals, by God unheeden;
By their past kisses chidden.

But they have kist and known
Clear things we dim by guesses;—
Spirit to spirit grown—
Heaven, born in hand caresses;
Love, fall from sheltering tresses.

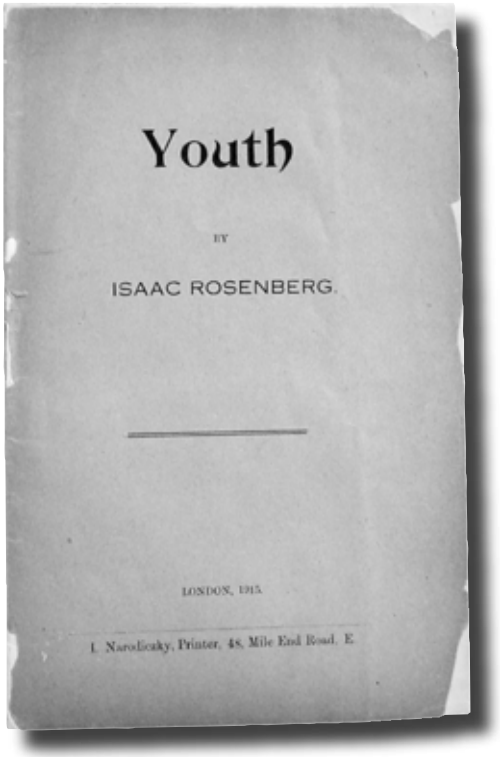
And they are dumb and strange;
Bared trees bowed from each other,
Their last green interchange
What lost dreams shall discover?
Dead, strayed, to love-stranged lover.

I. ROSENBERG.

"Wedded," as it appeared in Colour, *August 1915.*

Rosenberg showed up for military service with a copy of Donne's poems in his pocket. He hoped for assignment to the medical corps, but because he was short and generally frail he was assigned to the so-called "Bantam" battalion. As his training progressed through the fall and winter of 1915, he wrote poems in his spare time, and worked on the draft of a longer verse-drama to be called "Moses" – his most ambitious work up to this time. For unknown reasons, he turned down a promotion to lance corporal.

In March 1916 Rosenberg was transferred to a regular army unit – the Eleventh King's Own Royal Lancasters. For forgetfulness – or perhaps for working on "Moses"



Youth, *1915*.

or his other poems while on duty – Isaac was severely reprimanded. Another time he was punished for forgetting to wear his gas helmet.[14]

Rosenberg sent one of these new poems – "Marching (As Seen From the Left File)" – to his friends Marsh and Rodker. Another was "Spring 1916" – more advanced than his previous work. And he continued to work on "Moses."

Trying to be helpful, Rodker sent a copy of "Marching" to Harriet Monroe in Chicago, calling it a "rare and remarkable gem." Monroe had not been persuaded by Pound, but she was persuaded by Rodker. However, because of delays, "Marching" did not appear in *Poetry* until December of that same year – 1916.

By May 1916 Rosenberg's unit was preparing to leave for France. He was told that he had six days' furlough before embarkation. Hoping to see another selection of his poems in print before leaving for France, Rosenberg hustled back to London and got in touch with a friend nicknamed "Crazy" Cohen, who worked for the printer Narodiczky. The work of polishing his drafts and setting the type could not be completed during his furlough, so Rosenberg returned to his unit – leaving completion of the printing and distribution to Crazy Cohen and Isaac's sister, Annie.

Cohen called his makeshift operation "Paragon Printing Works" – the imprint which appears on the cover of Rosenberg's third booklet; and he used Narodiczky's machines to do the printing. The booklet was entitled *Moses*, after the long verse-drama of that same name, which took up 18 of the booklet's 26 pages. All in all, the booklet included nine poems, including two reprinted from *Youth*. One of the new ones was "Marching" – the one which Harriet Monroe had decided to print in *Poetry*.

No one knows how many copies of *Moses* were printed, but it could not have been many. Only 11 copies are reported in library holdings (compared to the 12 libraries which own copies of *Youth*), but copies turn up on Abe from time to time. Of those which survive, almost all appear in yellow soft-card wrappers. But a few were bound in a dark wine-colored cloth. Professor Cohen knew of only one such cloth-bound copy.[15] My copy, I regret to say, is one of the yellow-wrappered copies.

Paragon Printing Works never published another book, and Crazy Cohen went back to Russia in 1917 and disappeared from view.

There is no indication that Rosenberg ever intended that his verse-play "Moses" be performed on the stage. Professor Cohen thought "Moses" was Rosenberg's "culminating poem on the theme of his rejection of God." The poem, Cohen wrote, was "composed amid the throes of a dying civilization, tyrannically oppressed by a harsh spiteful omnipotence."[16] Rosenberg's poem puts these words in the mouth of Moses:

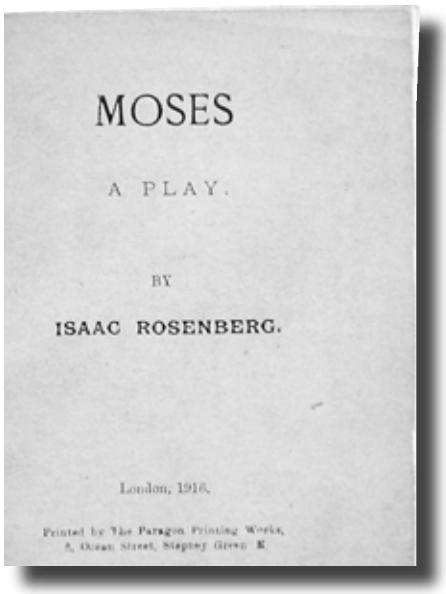
> I am sick of priests and forms,
> This rigid dry-boned refinement:
> As ladies' perfumes are
> Obnoxious to stern nature,
> This miasma of a rotting god
> Is to me.

Harriet Monroe, you may recall from a recent article in the *Caxtonian*,[17] had been fearful a year earlier that she would be criticized for publishing anti-Christian views if she reproduced several fairly tame stanzas from Wallace Stevens' "Sunday Morning." "Moses" would have given her a far stronger case of heartburn.

Although Eddie Marsh did not understand or appreciate Rosenberg's work generally, he liked some of the lines of "Moses" well enough to include them in his anthology of *Georgian Poetry, 1916-17*. It was the only passage of Rosenberg's writing he ever included in any of his five anthologies. (It reminds me of Emerson's unwillingness to include any of Whitman's verse in his own anthology, *Parnassus*.)

Perhaps because of the verse-play "Moses," some critics have suggested that Rosenberg aspired to embody Jewish themes or in some sense represent Judaism in his work. Ian Parsons, the editor of the 1979 *Collected Works*, offered a persuasive response. He pointed out that Rosenberg never learned Hebrew and had "only small interest in Judaism as such":

> No, his vision was cosmic rather than sectarian, personal and unique rather than specifically Jewish.[18]



Moses, *1916*.

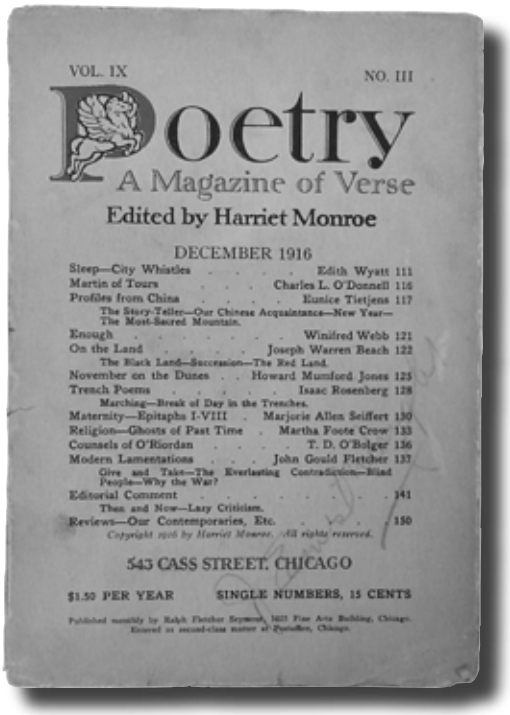
On June 1, 1916, Isaac sailed off to France with about 10 shillings in his pocket, which his sister had given him as he embarked. Through personal carelessness, Isaac had earlier spoiled or lost several paintings. This time he managed to leave his clothes and gear back at the embarkation point in England. By nightfall of June 3 he was in France, and before the end of the month he was at the Somme.

Rosenberg spent much of the summer of 1916 at an army desk job. He received an extravagant letter from his friend Gordon Bottomley, praising *Moses*:

> There is no doubt there was never a [more] real poet in the world than you are; to have such a gift as yours is a great responsibility....
>
> I cannot tell you the deep pleasure in which I read 'Moses." It is a prodigious advance... [I]t has the large fine movement, the ample sweep which is the first requisite of great poetry....

As the summer passed into fall of 1916, Rosenberg continued to write. In late July he sent Bottomley an early draft of the poem that would become "Break of Day In The Trenches" – the poem Paul Fussell thought was "the greatest poem of the war."[19]

See ***ISAAC ROSENBERG,*** *page 6*



VOL. IX NO. III

Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

DECEMBER 1916

543 CASS STREET, CHICAGO

$1.50 PER YEAR SINGLE NUMBERS, 15 CENTS

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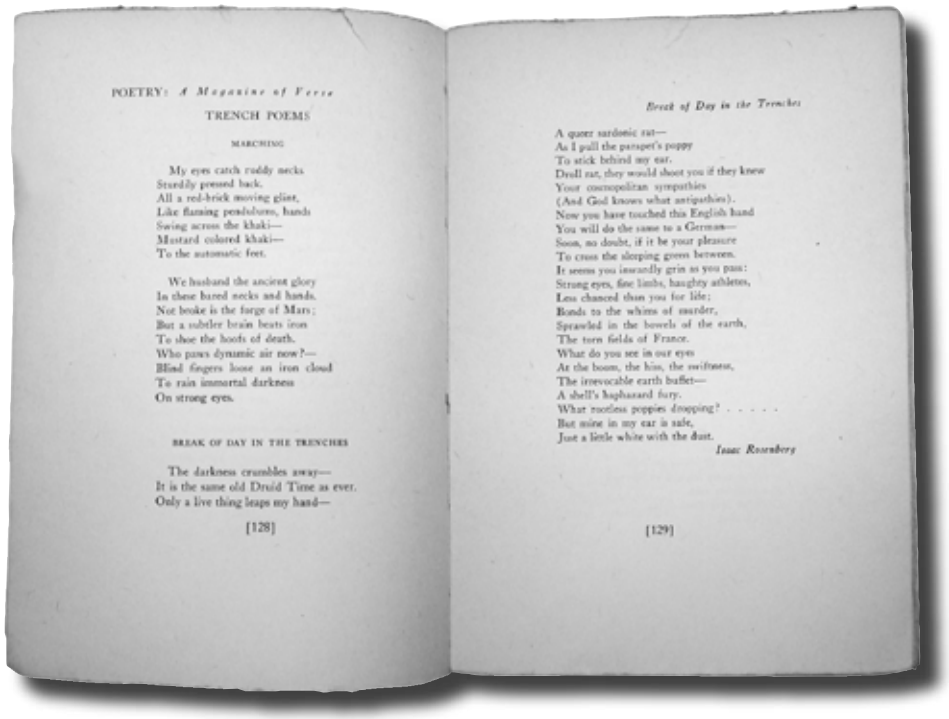


POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TRENCH POEMS

MARCHING

My eyes catch ruddy necks
Sturdily pressed back.
All a red-brick moving glint,
Like flaming pendulums, hands
Swing across the khaki—
Mustard colored khaki—
To the automatic feet.

We husband the ancient glory
In these bared necks and hands.
Not broke is the forge of Mars;
But a subtler brain beats iron
To shoe the hoofs of death.
Who paws dynamic air now?—
Blind fingers loose an iron cloud
To rain immortal darkness
On strong eyes.

BREAK OF DAY IN THE TRENCHES

The darkness crumbles away—
It is the same old Druid Time as ever.
Only a live thing leaps my hand—

[128]

Break of Day in the Trenches

A queer sardonic rat—
As I pull the parapet's poppy
To stick behind my ear.
Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew
Your cosmopolitan sympathies
(And God knows what antipathies).
Now you have touched this English hand
You will do the same to a German—
Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure
To cross the sleeping green between.
It seems you inwardly grin as you pass:
Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes,
Less chanced than you for life;
Bonds to the whims of murder,
Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,
The torn fields of France.
What do you see in our eyes
At the boom, the hiss, the swiftness,
The irrevocable earth buffet—
A shell's haphazard fury.
What ruthless poppies dropping? . . . . .
But mine in my ear is safe,
Just a little white with the dust.

Isaac Rosenberg

[129]

Poetry, *December 1916*

ISAAC ROSENBERG, *from page 5*

In September Isaac wrote directly to Harriet Monroe here in Chicago, sending a later version of of "Break of Day..." and asking if his earlier poem "Marching" – sent by his friend Rodker – had yet been published. This letter is in the archive of the Regenstein Library.

Monroe received Isaac's letter in early November and decided to include both "Marching" and the new poem – "Break of Day In The Trenches" – in the December 1916 issue of *Poetry*.

"Break of Day..." is Rosenberg's most widely anthologized poem. If you have read anything of Rosenberg's, it is probably this poem. It is not long.

The darkness crumbles away.
It is the same old druid Time as ever,
Only a live thing leaps my hand,
A queer sardonic rat,
As I pull the parapet's poppy
To stick behind my ear.
Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew
Your cosmopolitan sympathies.
Now you have touched this English hand
You will do the same to a German
Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure
To cross the sleeping green between.
It seems you inwardly grin as you pass
Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes,
Less chanced than you for life,
Bonds to the whims of murder,
Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,
The torn fields of France.
What do you see in our eyes
At the shrieking iron and flame
Hurled through still heavens?
What quaver – what heart aghast?
Poppies whose roots are in man's veins
Drop, and are ever dropping;
But mine in my ear is safe –
Just a little white with the dust.

Nearby is a picture of the version which appeared first – here in Chicago – in *Poetry Magazine*.

If you make the comparison, you will see how "Break of Day..." changed – from the early version sent to Bottomley, to the version published in Poetry, to the final forms that later appeared in the anthologies.

From December 1916 through the end of 1917, Rosenberg divided his time between the trenches and the support areas. He continued to write, and planned to produce a volume of trench poems. At one point, he developed a case of influenza, which was not so severe as to get him sent home but did lead to temporary assignment behind the lines.

In early 1917 Isaac was assigned to the Royal Engineers and given the duty of hauling barbed wire up to the front lines at night to reinforce the wire barricades separating the English from the Germans. Seeing the bodies of dead German soldiers in a sunken road led him to produce "Dead Man's Dump" – which Isaac sent to his friend Bottomley in May 1917. Isaac added a note to Bottomley, "I think it commonplace." But Cohen characterized it as "one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century literature."[20] It is too long to reproduce in its entirety. But here are the first and the last two stanzas:

The plunging limbers over the shattered track
Racketed with their rusty freight,
Stuck out like many crowns of thorns,
And the rusty stakes like scepters old
To stay the flood of brutish men
Upon our brothers dear.
# # #
Here is one not long dead;
His dark hearing caught our far wheels,
And the choked soul stretched weak hands
To reach the living word the far wheels said,
The blood-dazed intelligence beating for light,
Crying through the suspense of the far torturing wheels
Swift for the end to break
Or the wheels to break,
Cried as the tide of the world broke over his sight.
Will they come? Will they ever come?
Even as the mixed hoofs of the mules,
The quivering-bellied mules,
And the rushing wheels all mixed
With his tortured upturned sight.
So we crashed round the bend,
We heard his weak scream,
We heard his very last sound,
And our wheels grazed his dead face.

Isaac hoped "Dead Man's Dump" would appear along with his other trench poems

Self Portrait in a Steel Helmet, probably 1916.

in his next little pamphlet, which was to be similar to his earlier three publications. He wrote a letter to his friend Joseph Leftwich, saying,

> I have written a few war poems but when I think of [Whitman's] 'Drum Taps' mine are absurd. However, I would get a pamphlet printed if I were sure of selling about 60 at 1 [shilling] each….

But it was not to be.

Rosenberg passed the summer and fall of 1917 in relative security, going up to the line mostly at night when things were quiet. He continued to compose poems and to exchange letters with his friends. He enjoyed a short leave in September. By the end of the month, he was back in France – this time assigned to duty in the front lines, facing the German army at Cambrai. Another attack of influenza put him in the hospital in October and November; but he was back in the trenches in December 1917.

On January 26, 1918, Isaac wrote to Marsh complaining of his poor health, the weather, and life in the trenches:

> [W]hat is happening to me now is more tragic than the 'passion play.' Christ never endured what I endure. It is breaking me completely.

We report with sadness the deaths of previous club manager

Jane E. Smith,

who died on October 25,

and of

Frank J. Piehl '85,

who died on October 28.

Remembrances will appear in a future issue.

On March 21, 1918, the Germans launched an offensive at the center of the Allied line. Rosenberg's division was in the direct path.

On March 28, as Isaac was writing another letter to Marsh, the Germans renewed their attack, overrunning the English line. Isaac wrote to Marsh:

> We are now in the trenches again and though I feel very sleepy, I just have a chance to answer your letter so I will while I may. It's really my being lucky enough to bag an inch of candle that incites me to this pitch of punctual epistolary. I must measure my letter by the light….

The attack eased on Sunday, March 31. By this time, most of the men in Rosenberg's company were dead.

The next day, April 1, the survivors were told they could go to the rear. As they were leaving, a runner caught them and said the Germans were attacking again. They were asked to volunteer to return. Rosenberg was one of the few who went back to the front line, according to a soldier who was with him that morning. Within an hour, Isaac was dead, killed in close combat near the French village of Fampoux. He was 27.

Isaac's remains, which could not be individually identified, were buried in a British cemetery near Arras. His name – along with those of 15 other War Poets – is engraved on a tablet in the Poets Corner of Westminster Abbey.

Even before his death, Isaac's sister Annie sought out Binyon to try to arrange for publication of his poems. Binyon quietly began to pull together the scattered materials.

In 1921 Binyon and his friend Bottomley persuaded the Heinemann firm to publish the collection. Bottomley served as the main editor; and Binyon provided the introductory memoir.

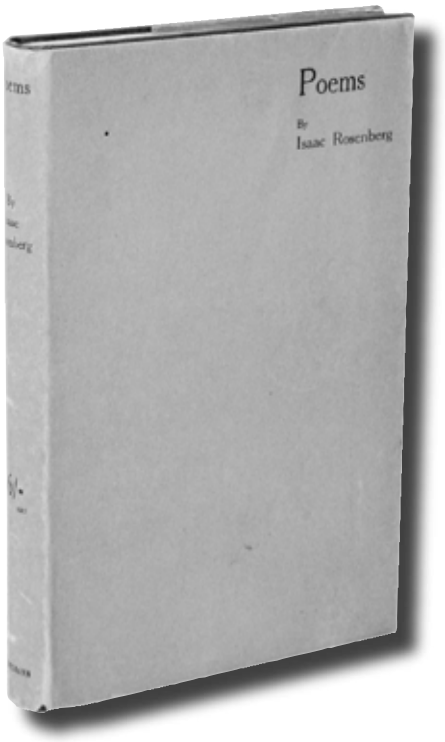
Rosenberg's *Poems* was published in June 1922, in an edition of 500 copies with a plain blue jacket. The volume had extracts from many of his letters to Bottomley and Marsh.

Poems received a few favorable notices. Edith Sitwell in the *New Age* wrote:

> Rosenberg was one of the two great poets killed in the War, the other being Wilfred Owen.

It is a remarkable testament to her judgment that she reached it so quickly. The general reaction was far more lukewarm, and sales were slow. By February 1923, only 286 copies had been sold.

One of the poems in the collection, entitled "Killed in Action," had actually been written



Poems, *1922*

by Rosenberg's old friend Leftwich. It had been published in the art magazine, *Colour*, in 1919, and misattributed to Rosenberg. When Bottomley was collecting Rosenberg's work for the 1922 volume, he mistakenly included Leftwich's poem. The *Spectator* then published a favorable review of the volume on September 16, 1922, quoting "Killed in Action," and treating it as Rosenberg's own epitaph. Bottomley learned of the mistake and corrected the record by publishing a brief note in the *Spectator* in October. In the note, Bottomley explained that the error had been initially made by the magazine editor to whom Leftwich had sent it, and added that the excellence of the poem required that authorship now be correctly attributed to Leftwich – "the young and promising poet who is its true author."

Bottomley also wrote to Leftwich explaining what had happened, and why he had corrected the record. He hoped that Leftwich would consider this correction "satisfactory." (Bottomley letter in the collection of the author.)

Presumably Leftwich did consider it satisfactory. In any event, inclusion of his poem in Rosenberg's volume gave it far more favorable attention over the years than it would otherwise have received.

Subsequent collections of Rosenberg's works – principally the *Collected Works* (including letters and essays) in 1937, and also

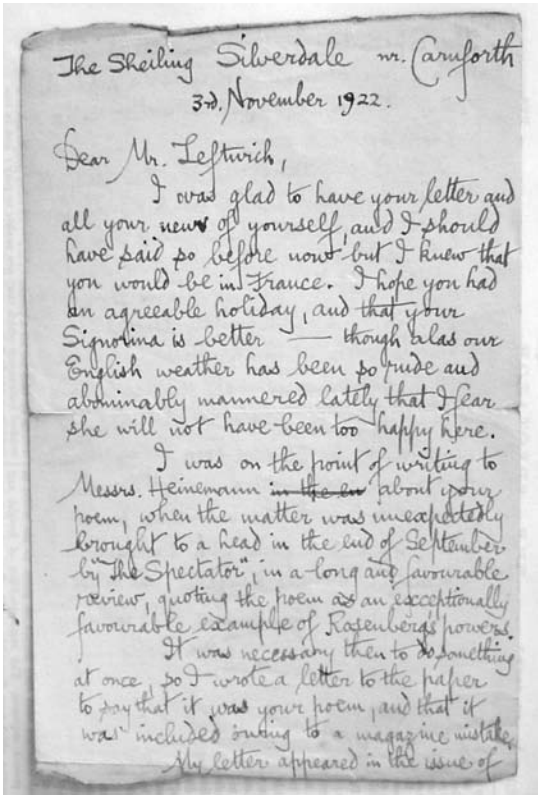
See ***ISAAC ROSENBERG****, page 8*

ISAAC ROSENBERG, *from page 7*

the *Collected Poems* in 1949, as well as new editions in 1979, 2003, and 2004 – have amplified Rosenberg's reputation.

In the decades immediately following the Great War, Rosenberg was grouped with the War Poets. This was natural since he was a victim of the War, and many of his greatest poems were about the War experience. But only about 10 percent of his poems were in some sense "war poems." As his reputation has grown over the years and as people have had occasion to read the collections, they have realized that Rosenberg was much more than a "War Poet."

Where does Rosenberg fit in the great river of English poetry? With the Georgians? Or the Modernists? As Philip Hobsham explained – in *Tradition and Experiment in English Poetry*[21] – the prevailing "tradition or style" at the end of the 19th Century had been Victorian. The Georgians preserved that tradition by "mummifying" it. Then Eliot, Pound and the rest of the Modernists came along and attacked the old tradition – substituting what Hobsham considered an American literary revolution. He regarded this Modernist flowering as an unattractive weed patch, for a couple of reasons. First, he thought it ignored Thomas Hardy, the "one great Victorian." Second, he thought that because the Georgians lacked the gifts to create a springboard to modern sensibility, Eliot and his followers "filled the gap" with an alien product which included "some of the worst writing in English."



The Sheiling Silverdale nr. Carnforth
3rd. November 1922.

Dear Mr. Leftwich,

I was glad to have your letter and all your news of yourself, and I should have said so before now but I knew that you would be in France. I hope you had an agreeable holiday, and that your Signorina is better — though alas our English weather has been so rude and abominably mannered lately that I fear she will not have been too happy here.

I was on the point of writing to Messrs. Heinemann ~~in the en~~ about your poem, when the matter was unexpectedly brought to a head in the end of September by "The Spectator" in a long and favourable review, quoting the poem as an exceptionally favourable example of Rosenberg's powers. It was necessary then to do something at once, so I wrote a letter to the paper to say that it was your poem, and that it was included ~~owing~~ to a magazine mistake. My letter appeared in the issue of

Bottomley to Leftwich, 1922

According to Hobsham's theory, the tragedy occurred because the Georgians had so little to offer. Readers were forced to choose between "a reactionary, moribund Victorianism, and a revolutionary American transplant." This would not have happened but for the War. "At least three poets died who, if they had survived, would surely have constituted a…challenge to the prevailing standards in poetry." These three, according to Hobsham, were Edward Thomas, Wilfred Owen, and Isaac Rosenberg. (Diligent readers of *The Caxtonian*[22] may remember that Edward Thomas was Robert Frost's close friend, and that it was Frost who urged him to shift over from prose to poetry.) Hobsham placed Thomas at the pinnacle because of his "modern sensibility" – Owen, because of his technique and his "distinctively modern ambivalence" – and Rosenberg, because of his innovations, his "sprung verse," his use of myth, and his distillation of an "overmastering experience" into new forms. Owen's work resembled Keats, he believed, but Rosenberg's "mature poems resemble nothing but themselves."

Hobsham concluded that if these three had lived, "there would have been no question of having to choose between revolution and reaction…what is best in English poetry generally is what we find in the uncompleted work of these three poets…'vigor within the discipline of shape'" – "freedom won…not through breaking down a form but through reshaping it."

In the end, it matters little whether Rosenberg is regarded as the greatest war poet – or whether he produced greater work than, say, Wilfred Owen. Writing poetry is not a competitive sport, and there are no generally-accepted standards by which to judge greatness.

Siegfried Sassoon, who was himself one of the better war poets, wrote a foreword to Rosenberg's *Collected Works (1937)*, and had this to say:

> "Break of Day in the Trenches" has for me a poignant and nostalgic quality which eliminates critical analysis…. And beyond this poem I see the poems he might have written after the war. Isaac Rosenberg was naturally empowered with something of the divine spirit which touches our human clay to sublimity of expression.[22]

Having studied all the War Poets, Professor Cohen agreed with the view that:

> Just as Owen is one of the few poets worthy to be compared with Keats, *Rosenberg is one of the few worthy to be compared with Shakespeare*. He had *no opportunity* – genius apart – to write anything on the scale of one of Shakespeare's great plays. But his work shows that the spirit of Shakespeare can be revived without imitating Shakespeare (emphasis supplied).

"No opportunity…." These are the saddest of words. We still feel the reverberations of the guns that began firing in August 1914.

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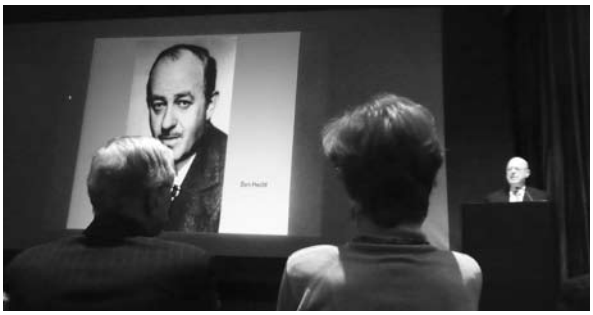
All photographs by the author of books and manuscripts in his own collection.

NOTES

[1] Fussell, 55, 250.
[2] Bergonzi, 109
[3] *Ibid.*, 116.
[4] Three biographies of Rosenberg were published in 1975. The most useful of these, I think, is *Journey To The Trenches, The Life of Isaac Rosenberg, 1890-1918*, by Joseph Cohen (London, 1975). For the basic biographical facts of Rosenberg's life, I rely on Cohen's book, as well as Ian Parsons' introduction to the 1979 edition of Rosenberg's *Collected Works* (Oxford, 1979). The other 1975 biographies are Jean Liddiard's *Isaac Rosenberg: The Half Used Life* (Gollancz, 1975), and Jean M. Wilson's *Isaac Rosenberg Poet and Painter* (Woolf, 1975). Wilson recently produced another version of Rosenberg's life – *Isaac Rosenberg, The Making of a Great War Poet* (London 2008). In 1995, a batch of Rosenberg's letters and draft poems turned up during the removal of the British Library from the British Museum; these were published in Rosenberg, *Poetry Out of My Head and Heart* (Enitharmon Press, 2007).
[5] Cohen, 29.
[6] *Ibid.*, 25, 33.
[7] *Collected Works* (1979), xxii.
[8] Rosenberg, *Poems* (1922), 3-5.
[9] Cohen, 203.
[10] Rosenberg, *Poetry Out of My Head and Heart*, 35.
[11] August 1915.
[12] *Collected Works* (1979), xx.
[13] Cohen, 121.
[14] *Ibid.*, 134; Rosenberg, *Poetry Out of My Head and Heart*, 93.
[15] *Ibid.*, 207.
[16] *Ibid.*, 140.
[17] Vol. XIV, No. 4, April 2006, 6.
[18] *Collected Works* (1979), xxi.
[19] Fussell, 250; Rosenberg, *Poetry Out of My Head and Heart*, 74-75.
[20] Cohen, 163; Rosenberg, *id.*, 92.
[21] London, 1979.
[22] Vol. XIII, No. 11, Nov. 2005, 10.
[23] *Collected Works* (1979), ix.

Grolier Club and Caxton Club members at (clockwise from upper left) the Arts Club, the Ryerson & Burnham Libraries, the Chicago Botanic Garden, the Fortnightly, the Newberry Library, the Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago; and the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.

Caxtonians Welcome Grolier Club Members to Chicago



Caxtonians and Grolier Club members spent a festive evening together at the Arts Club of Chicago on Thursday, October 1, 2009. The occasion marked the opening of a trip to Chicago by members of the Grolier Club that concluded on Monday, October 5. Neil Harris, the Preston and Sterling Morton Professor Emeritus in History and Art History at the University of Chicago, gave an illustrated talk on his book, *The Chicagoan: A Lost Magazine of the Jazz Age*, published in 2008 by the University of Chicago Press. Forty-six Grolier Club members and twenty-two Caxtonians attended the event and enjoyed the chance to meet each other. Current Grolier president William Helfand, Grolier Club; and David Mann exchanged toasts; and many in the group wondered how we might arrange future joint gatherings.

The Grolier Club visit was organized by a group of local members who are also active Caxtonians: Alice Schreyer chaired the project with the assistance of John Blew, Bob McCamant, Paul Ruxin, David Spadafora, and Michael Thompson. Bob McCamant and Wendy Husser contributed a brief history of the Caxton Club to a handsome keepsake, which also included copies of Caxton exhibition catalogues. Brad Jonas contributed specially imprinted Powell's bags for each member of the group. The keepsakes, the bags, and the splendid success of the trip will help raise the visibility of Chicago and the Caxton Club as major players in the book world.

Neither Friday's bad weather nor Olympic-sized disappointment dampened the travelers' spirits or enthusiasm for Chicago's bibliophilic and cultural treasures. Caxtonians played key roles in many of the group's institutional visits, which included the libraries at the Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago's Ryerson & Burnham Libraries and Prints & Drawings Department, the Lenhardt Library of the Chicago Botanic Garden, the Field Museum, the Newberry Library, and the University of Chicago's Special Collections Research Center and Oriental Institute. Presentations spanned millennia, as we examined artifacts illustrating the origins of writing in Egypt and Mesopotamia, viewed Eastern and Western medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, and heard fascinating presentations on books and manuscripts important to the history of astronomy, natural history, travel and exploration; Chicago history; cartography; Americana, contemporary science, literature and poetry; and more.

Visits to private collections were a highlight of the trip. Caxtonians Roger Baskes, John Blew, Ed Hirschland, Celia and David Hilliard, and Vincent Buonanno, opened their collections for the group, mostly in their homes. The Grolier Club members were thrilled by theiir presentations and their hospitality. Visitors were delighted by both the diversity and the complementarity of the collections they viewed. At the closing dinner Bill Buice, a past president of the Grolier Club, remarked that he was struck that Chicagoans expressed genuine warmth for each others' collections and little of the competitiveness that marks such relations among New York collectors.

The schedule was tight, and we needed to divide the group into subgroups to accommodate the space available. As a result, the time for the presentations and viewings was limited, and the travelers left each location wanting to see and learn more. We hope that they will spread the word about the Caxton Club and Chicago's distinguished book history and culture; and that many of them will return to explore our wonderful city in further depth.

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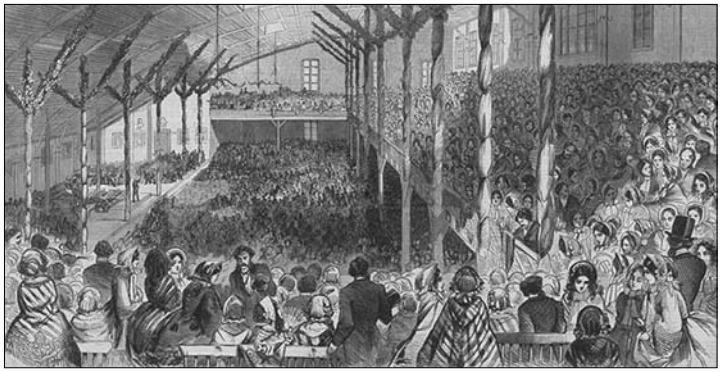
Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Bernice E. Gallagher
(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.

Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: "Chicago Cabinet: C.D. Arnold Photographs of the World's Columbian Exposition" (from the Ryerson Library's archive of large platinum prints, tracing the Fair's development from 1892 through to 1894), Galleries 3 and 4, December 19 through February 28, 2010; "Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago" (including maps, diagrams, perspective drawings and watercolors, historically significant and artistically exceptional, many of them in fragile condition and rarely displayed publicly), Gallery 24, through December 15; "Playing with Pictures: "The Art of Victorian Photocollage"(rarely displayed albums and loose pages from collections around the world, avant-garde works combining photographs and watercolors in whimsical and fantastical compositions), Galleries 1 and 2, through January 3, 2010; "Heart and Soul: Art from Coretta Scott King Award Books, 2006-2009" (a collection of picture books whose African American authors and illustrators promote understanding and appreciation of all cultures and their contributions to the American dream), Ryan Education Center and Gallery 10, through April 18, 2010.



Republicans in Nominating Convention, at the Newberry
from Harper's Weekly, May 19, 1860. On loan from Kimberli Curry to the Library of Congress

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: "Children's Books Around the World" (uncommon children's books on nature and the plant world, published in eastern and western Europe and delighting young and old alike), through February 2, 2010.

Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: "Inspiring Dreams! Promoting the Burnham Plan" (documents and artifacts used to "sell" the Burnham plan to the Chicago City Planning Commission and the public), Chicago Gallery, 3rd Floor, through February 2010; "Tall Man of Destiny: Images of Abraham Lincoln" (images of the president made during his lifetime, after his death in 1865 and through to today, all from the Library's collections), Special Collections Exhibition Hall, 9th Floor, through February 2010.

Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-642-4600: "Abraham Lincoln Transformed" (over 150 artifacts, including original Lincoln manuscripts, slave artifacts, fan and hate mail sent to Lincoln during his time in office, all reflecting how the President's views were tested and ultimately transformed), Benjamin B. Green-Field Gallery and The Mazza Foundation Gallery, through April 12, 2010.

Columbia College Chicago, Center for Book and Paper Arts, 2nd Floor, 1104 S. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, 312-369-6631: "Pearl of the Snowlands: Buddhist Printing at the Derge Parkhang" (from the collection of the only surviving traditional printing temple in Tibet, a living cultural institution that stores the woodblocks used to publish sutras/holy scriptures, commentaries, and histories of traditional Tibetan Buddhism), through December 5.

DePaul University, John T. Richardson Library, 2350 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, 312-325-7864: "The City that Works: Burnham and the Chicago Plan" (from the University's Special Collections and Archives, a first edition copy of the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* as well as other works from this time period, highlighting the history and development of the city), Room 314, through December 18.

DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, 773-947-0600: "The Soul of Bronzeville: The Regal, Club DeLisa, and the Blues" (original photographs, memorabilia, music and concert collectibles, all from the Chicago Blues Museum), through December 13.

Loyola University Chicago, Cudahy Library, 1032 W. Sheridan Road, Chicago, 773-508-2632: "Daniel H. Burnham, Creator of 1909 Plan of Chicago" (archival material highlighting the city before the Burnham Plan, at the time of the Great Chicago Fire, the 1893 Columbian Exposition, the 1909 Plan of Chicago, and after the Burnham Plan), Donovan Reading Room, ongoing.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: "With Malice Toward None: The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Exhibition" (a Library of Congress exhibition featuring books, broadsides, newspapers, prints, photographs, artifacts, maps, manuscript letters, the Bible on which President Lincoln swore the oath of office, his hand-annotated First Inaugural Address, and early copies or facsimiles of the Second Inaugural Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg Address), Smith and East Galleries, through December 19; "Honest Abe of the West" (including rare copies of printed materials relating to the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates, recently discovered ephemera from the 1860 presidential election and the Republican Convention held in Chicago, letters received by Lincoln and then annotated in the president's own hand, and items on loan from the Alfred Orendorff Collection of various legal documents written in Lincoln's own hand), Donnelley Gallery, through February 15, 2010.

Northwestern University, Charles Deering Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658: "Best of Bologna: Edgiest Artists of the 2008 International Children's Book Fair" (featuring 100 artists from around the world, work that breaks new ground in children's book illustration), upper lobby, extended through January 4, 2010; "Burnham at Northwestern" (documents, photographs, blueprints and sketches of Daniel Burnham's 1905 "Plans of Northwestern," a redesign of the University's Evanston campus), Special Collections and Archives, ongoing.

University of Illinois at Chicago, Library of the Health Sciences-Chicago, MC 763, 1750 W. Polk Street, Chicago, 312-996-8977: "Embellished Medical Title Pages: The Sixteenth through the Eighteenth Centuries" (extraordinary images of decorative title pages from the University's rare book collection), second floor near administration office, ongoing.

Bernice Gallagher will be happy to receive your listings at either 847-234-5255 or gallagher@lakeforest.edu.

Caxtonians Collect: Peggy Sullivan

Sixtieth in a series of interviews with members

Interviewed by Wendy Cowles Husser

You might think that you know Peggy Sullivan because she has been, for more than 14 years, so contributory at the Caxton Club. Well that is not all she has been doing. She is a world traveler with so many people and places to connect with, and so many different responsibilities, that listening to her for this piece was like being educated on the history of libraries of all kinds (to say nothing of the asides about other adventures) in America and elsewhere during the last 50 years!

Photograph by Robert McCamant

Peggy came to Chicago in 1963 from Kansas City, Missouri, her home, by way of Washington, D.C., for a job as the Knapp School Libraries Project Director at the American Library Association. She held that job until 1968 when the project ended but stayed on at the ALA to direct the Junior College Library Information Project until 1969. She moved to other places, returning to Chicago in 1973, leaving again in 1981, and returned in 1992. She became a member of the Caxton Club in 1995, the year of the Club's Centennial. Years earlier, a Caxton member had invited Peggy to attend a meeting of the Club, but she never got to attend because that potential host was unexpectedly away at the time and a woman was not allowed to attend without a host.

She did not, in fact, join until some 20 years later when a friend saw promotional items Bob Cotner had distributed for the Centennial celebration, and asked Peggy to attend with her; the publicity stated that you needed only to call and make a reservation, and you could attend. This must have been a special dispensation for the celebratory year to reach out for new members. As it turned out, the friend did not join, but Peggy was encouraged by the elegant Fortnightly Club and also by at least six Caxton members who encouraged her to join. And the rest, as they say, is history. Peggy served terms on the Council, and was Program Chair of the Caxton Club for two years, in addition to her many other regular contributions.

During her years as a member Peggy was never a bystander. As her past confirms, from her AB at Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa, to her Masters in Library Science at the Catholic University of America, in Washington, DC, through her PhD from the University of Chicago in 1972, and well beyond, Peggy's committed career embraced nearly every aspect of what a librarian could do.

As early as 1956 Peggy became an author, publishing *The O'Donnells*, followed in 1968 by a published report of the Knapp School Libraries Project for the ALA, as editor of the publication, and the next year with her book, *Many Names for Eileen*. And along this busy way she also managed to write articles for the *Caxtonian*, the *Journal of Education of Library and Information Science*, *Book Links*, *Libraries and Culture*, and numerous reviews of books and other media, including 100 for the *School Library Journal* alone.

Because a professor she had in Library School or at Catholic University had mentioned in passing that libraries should be involved with trade unions, Peggy turned that idea into her masters thesis, earned by the age of 24. The first chapter of this thesis was later published in a library newsletter and then in a book. Her doctoral dissertation, "Carl H Milam and the American Library Association," was published as a book by H.W. Wilson, in 1976. Peggy proudly says that she has always written for her profession, and that has been the most special component of her career.

Professionally, Peggy has held many committee and chair assignments for the ALA, the Catholic Library Association, and so on, was President of the ALA in 1980-1981, and of the Children's Services Division of the ALA in 1976-1977. She's had interim and part-time instructional assignments in library education programs at Catholic University of America, the University of Maryland, Drexel University, Syracuse University, Rosary College, the University of Chicago, and Rutgers. She has consulted for UNESCO on school libraries in Australia, worked with the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Chicago Public schools, the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, the University of Tennessee, and numerous public libraries and library systems all up through 2009.

And, for the Caxton commitment, during all these assignments and trips, Peggy Sullivan managed to sponsor more than 20 new members for the Club, if memory serves, and possibly more. And I know personally her generous way of paying for many lunches and dinners at both the Caxton Club and for the Chicago Literary Society programs. At a memorable CLS event on a Monday evening at the Cliff Dwellers, she beguiled us all with hilarious and very entertaining story telling!

So, this busy story teller, author, dean, vice president, director, professor, consultant, and award winner might not have a collection of books (although she reads prodigiously as you know if you have seen her on the bus), but she has a wonderful collection of travel memories, collecting people from all over the world whom many of us were privileged to confirm in person at her recent birthday party for at least 100 close acquaintances! She has maintained her commitment to the growth and modernization of libraries and the training of librarians, and to being a strong and loyal member, cum laude, of the Caxton Club. And the Caxton Club is lucky to have collected Peggy.

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Luncheon Program
Friday, December 11, 2009, Union League Club
Susan Hanes
"My Persistent Phantom": a literary journey of the heart

Scott Turow declared Wilkie Collins's *The Dead Alive* to be the world's first legal thriller. Best-selling author Audrey Niffenegger affirmed that Collins, along with Henry James, inspired her just-released novel, *Her Fearful Symmetry*. At the 2009 Caxton Symposium, Dr. Sara Malton spoke at length about Wilkie Collins. Yes, Collins is receiving a resurgence in popularity a century and a half after crowds lined up to buy the next installment of his sensational novel, *The Woman in White*.

Caxtonian Susan Hanes has had an interest in this Victorian novelist since she was a schoolgirl. She has made literary pilgrimages in search of Wilkie Collins and in 2008, published *Wilkie Collins's American Tour*, the story of his six-month visit to America and his relationship with the American reading public. Susan will introduce us to the man and share with us what initially fascinated her and then sustained her interest in Collins and how she carried out her extensive research.

The December luncheon will take place at the Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (in the main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am; program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is $30. Details of the December dinner: it will take place in Ruggles Hall at the Newberry Library. Timing: spirits at 5:00.

Dinner Program
Wednesday, December 16, 2009, Newberry Library
Holiday Revels and Auction

Get ready for the all-in-one Caxton Club Holiday Revels, where you can imbibe and dine splendidly at our reasonable rates, and watch professional actors in *Mid Winter's Tales '09*, performed by actors from ShawChicago. And, of course, take pleasure in the usual silent and live auctions where you will find book bargains galore, exercise the free market economy, and benefit the Caxton Club into the bargain. Auctioneer will be Caxtonian Mary Williams from Leslie Hindman Auctioneers. Don't miss this fiscal-and happiness-stimulus package at the Newberry Library, 5-9 PM. You can peruse auction items already received on the Club web site, www.caxtonclub.org, from the first of December. (And if you haven't yet donated something for the auction, it's not too late – donations will be accepted up to Friday December 11th. Get them to Dan Crawford at the Newberry.).

Dinner at 6:00, followed by live auction and entertainment. Dinner is $48, drinks are $5. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org; ***reservations are needed by noon Tuesday for the Friday luncheon, and by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.***

Beyond December...

JANUARY LUNCHEON
On January 8, Caxtonian John Railing will present an illustrated talk about moveable books, beginning in the 16th century, and including gems from his vast collection of over 6,000 items.

JANUARY DINNER
The January dinner meeting will be held on the 20th at the Cliff Dwellers. Speaker to be announced.

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON
On February 12, the luncheon meeting will take place at the Union League Club. Speaker will be Sally Kalmbach speaking on her new book, *The Jewel of the Gold Coast: Mrs.Potter Palmer's Chicago*.

FEBRURARY DINNER
On Wednesday, February 17, at the Cliff Dwellers, author James Ballowe will talk about Joy Morton, 35-year Caxtonian and founder of both Morton Salt and the Morton Arboretum.