ATHENA RARE BOOKS
Catalog 20

Erato, the Muse of Poetry

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EMILY DICKENSON
(1830-1886)

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne’er succeed


The only publication of one of her poems in book form during her lifetime. “Success” is the final poem to appear in the book – on page 174 without attribution (as do all of the poems in this book).

Success
Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne’er succeed.
To comprehend a Nectar
Requires the sorest need.
Not one of all the Purple Host
Who took the flag to-day,
Can tell the definition,
So plain, of Victory,
As he defeated, dying,
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Break, agonizing clear.

The first published edition of “No Name Series” rather than the slightly later “Red Line Edition.”

According to BAL (#118, under Alcott) two formats of this title were advertised in Publisher’s Weekly, the No Name Series and the Red Line Edition. Myerson adds that the Red line Edition, according to the publisher’s records, was printed several days after the No Name Series. (The Red Line is larger in format than the No Name, has a red rule box around every page of text, and includes one illustration not in the earlier No Name Series.)


This copy has 30 of the poems identified by author in pencil on the Contents pages.

Original black cloth with covers and spine ruled, lettered and pictorially stamped in red. Spine stamped in gilt. Verso of front cover and front free endpaper printed with publisher’s advertisements along with an additional publisher’s ad (on blue paper) tipped into the front free endpaper. A six-line poem has been written in pencil on the first blank leaf along with a former owner’s name in pencil (indecipherable) to the upper right corner of the title page. Very minor wear to head and foot of spine. Circular purple ink stamp of the York Library in Maine (1½” wide) to pages 5, 7 & [9]. Aside from these markings, this is a lovely copy of this important Dickenson work.
Margaret are you grieving / Over Goldengrove unleaving?


The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil… [#7]

Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow… [#13]

Margaret are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?… [#31]

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame… [#34]

One of just 750 copies printed.

Gerard Manley Hopkins is considered to be one of the great poets of the late Victorian era. However, because his style was so radically different from that of his contemporaries, his best poems were not accepted for publication during his lifetime, and his achievement was not fully recognized until after World War I.

Hopkins’s family encouraged his artistic talents when he was a youth in Essex, England. However, Hopkins became estranged from his Protestant family when he converted to Roman Catholicism. After becoming a Jesuit in 1875, he burned all of the poetry he had written up until that time. Three of those poems survive in this book but the others published here were written during the last fourteen years of his life.

The poet died in 1889 after contracting typhoid fever while making one of his visits to the slums of Dublin as a priest.

This collection was put together by Hopkins’ friend, the Poet Laureate, Robert Bridges, who assembled these poems from letters and other sources and published this book nineteen years after Hopkins’ death. Apart from a very few poems published in anthologies, most of these works remained unpublished until their appearance here.

“Hopkins’s poetry, with its religious faith, his experiments in versification, his ‘dark night of the soul’ would have reduced all his Victorian contemporaries to immediate insignificance – like Rimbaud’s in France – had they but known him.” (Connolly, #33)

Original light blue paper boards with cream cloth spine and paper label. Slight wear to spine label effecting two letters. Overall, a lovely copy.
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?


One of just 400 copies printed.

First edition of “The Second Coming” – one of the great poems of the twentieth century – along with fourteen others including his famous “Easter, 1916.”

The Second Coming
Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

One of four hundred copies printed and published by Yeats' sister, Elizabeth Corbet Yeats. According to the colophon on page [35] it was finished on All Soul’s Day [November 1st], 1920 – although Wade claims the book was not published until February of 1921. Most of these poems also appeared in The Nation (either November 6 or November 13, 1920) and/or The Dial (New York), November 1920 although Easter, 1916 was privately printed in 1916 and A Prayer for My Daughter first appeared in The Irish Statesman on November 8, 1919.

Beautifully preserved original blue paper boards with buff linen spine; lettered in black on front cover, paper label printed in black bearing the words MICHAEL ROBARTES on spine; blue endpapers matching binding; all edges untrimmed. With the original unprinted tan dust jacket – chipped on the spine exposing the title label below – preserved in a glassine wrap. An absolutely fine copy of this delicate book in the original dust jacket – preserved in an elegant red clamshell box.
ROBERT FROST
(1874-1963)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood…
…and that has made all the difference


$ 3,500

First issue with the repeated lines on page 88 and “Come” for “Gone” on page 93. Also includes “Birches.” One of 4,000 copies in the edition. Mountain Interval was Frost’s first book to be published originally in the United States, his two earlier titles having first appeared in England.

With the first edition printing of his classic:

Birches
When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy’s been swinging them.
But swinging doesn’t bend them down to stay.
Ice storms to that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel…

Along with perhaps his most famous poem:

The Road Not Taken
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

In the original tan dust jacket that is a bit worn at the spine tips. Original dark blue-green cloth with bright gilt lettering to front cover and spine. With a bookseller’s ticket to the inside of the rear cover: “Gardenside Bookshop / 270 Boylston Street / Boston.” Page 97 has a closed tear – not affecting text. A very pretty copy of this Frost classic.
Oh, do not ask, “What is it?”
Let us go and make our visit.


Let us go then, you and I
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question....
Oh, do not ask, “What is it?”
Let us go and make our visit.

One of just 500 copies printed.

One of the greatest, most radical and most influential pieces of literature written in the 20th century.

Commonly known simply as “Prufrock,” this is Eliot’s first professionally published poem. He began writing the poem in February 1910, and it was first published in the June 1915 issue of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* at the instigation of Ezra Pound. The present slim twelve-poem book was issued in 1917.

At the time of its publication, “Prufrock” was considered outlandish, but is now seen as heralding a paradigmatic cultural shift from late 19th-century Romantic verse to Modernism.

The poem's structure was heavily influenced by Eliot's extensive reading of Dante and makes several references to the Bible and other literary works—including Shakespeare and Marvell. Eliot narrates the experience of Prufrock using the stream of consciousness technique developed by his fellow Modernist writers. The poem, described as a "drama of literary anguish," is a dramatic interior monologue of an urban man, stricken with feelings of isolation and an incapability for decisive action that is said "to epitomize frustration and impotence of the modern individual" and "represent thwarted desires and modern disillusionment".

Prufrock laments his physical and intellectual inertia, the lost opportunities in his life and lack of spiritual progress, and he is haunted by reminders of unattained carnal love. With visceral feelings of weariness, regret, embarrassment, longing, emasculation, sexual frustration, a sense of decay, and an awareness of mortality, "Prufrock" has become one of the most recognized voices in modern literature.

Original stiff buff paper wrappers. Front cover unevenly browned and creased on top corner. Spine cracked in several places and lightly chipped at top and bottom. In a customized clamshell box with leather spine. Overall, a very good copy of this delicate work.
April is the cruelest month...

Perhaps the Most Representative Work of Modernist Poetry


April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke’s,
My cousin’s, he took me out on a sled,
And I was frighted. He said, Marie,
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
In the mountains, there you feel free.
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

Copy #62 of the first 500 numbered copies

According to Gallup the first 500 copies were bound with flexible black cloth covers, as here. In addition, each book was numbered – this one is #62 – on the verso of TP in numbers 5mm (rather than the later 2mm) high, as here.

Gallup further states that the earliest of the 500 copies have the word "mountain" spelled correctly on page 41 at line 339. This book has dropped the “a” in that word, reading "Dead mount in mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit" at line 339. This marks it as a later copy of the first issue of 500 numbered copies.

Eliot added pages of notes (pp. 53-64) to this first book appearance of the poem, partly in order to lengthen the work to make it more convenient for the printer. The poet later commented that the notes “became the remarkable exposition of bogus scholarship that is still on view today.”

Undoubtedly Eliot’s most famous poem, “The Waste Land” was praised by critic I. A. Richards as a “perfect emotive description of a state of mind which is probably inevitable for a while to all meditative people.” Today it is recognized as perhaps the most representative work of modernist verse, though Eliot himself later termed it a “personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life…”

Original publisher black cloth with gilt lettering. The spine is just a bit lightened with light rubbing at the extremities. Overall, a lovely copy.
Eliot’s Christmas Poem for 1929


...Issues from the hand of time the simple soul
Irresolute and selfish, misshapen, lame,
Unable to fare forward or retreat,
Fearing the warm reality, the offered good,
Denying the importunity of the blood,
Shadow of its own shadows, spectre in its own gloom,
Leaving disordered papers in a dusty room;
Living first in the silence after the viaticum…

One of 3,000 copies printed.

From 1925, Eliot worked for the publisher Faber and Faber as literary editor and member of the board of directors. In 1927, their autumn catalogue announced: the Ariel pamphlets:

This series of little booklets consists of single previously unpublished poems each suitably decorated in colours and dressed in the gayest wrappers. It has been designed to take the place of Christmas cards and other similar tokens that one sends for remembrance sake at certain seasons of the year. Some of the poems have Christmas for their subject: but a genuine poem is not a thing appropriate only to one season of the year, and any one of these poems with its attendant decorations would be a joy to read and see at any time, whatever the season might be…

This is Eliot’s third contributions to the Ariel series of poems (#23). He had previously published “The Journey of the Magi” (#8) and “A Song for Simeon” (#11) in the two previous years respectively.

‘Animula’ means ‘little soul’ and the atmosphere and vocabulary of the poem are suggestive of Christmas, with ‘the fragrant brilliance of the Christmas tree’, but, like all of the Ariel series, not specifically anchored to it.

Sewn with paper wrappers. Does not include green paper envelope which was issued with unsold copies in 1938. A very good copy.
His First (failed) Attempt at a Verse Drama


One of 4,100 copies printed.

This was Eliot’s first attempt at writing a verse drama (something he excelled at later in life), but it was one that he was unable to finish. In 1926 and 1927 he separately published two scenes (titled "Fragment of a Prologue" and "Fragment of an Agon") from this attempt and then collected them in 1932 into the present book.

The attempt is most notable for being written in a rhythmic prose – perhaps, one critic has stated, with the idea that “certain things in it [would be] accentuated by drum-beats.” The style of the play is frequently associated with the rhythm of jazz music as well as the "rhythm of the common speech of his time." Despite this radical ambition, Eliot never wrote another play with the musical rhythms of _Sweeney_.

The scenes have frequently been performed together as a one-act play.

Original blue boards (earliest issue point) with red lettering on the spine. The original yellow dust jacket with blue lettering has unclipped price listed as 2s. 6d. on insider from front flap. The jacket spine ever so slightly sunned. With a New York booksellers ticket to the inside rear cover. Overall, a near fine copy in a lovely dust jacket.

Originally published as the final poem in Collected Poems 1909-1935 (Gallup A32), this first separate printing was issued by Faber and Faber in 1941 in an edition of 4,000 copies.

Eliot visited Burnt Norton, a decaying estate, with Emily Hale (a long-time acquaintance and possible love interest) in September of 1934 where they walked in its neglected garden – which became “the scene of Eliot’s divergence into a lost world of experience” (Gordon, T.S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life, p. 267). Its five separate parts are intensely lyrical, mystically challenging and a profound reflection on the nature of time.

Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden…

And the bird called, in response to
The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery,
And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses
Had the look of flowers that are looked at.
There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting.
So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,
Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
To look down into the drained pool.

Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty,
Go, said the bird, for the leaves are full of children,
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.
Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

Original green paper over white card covers, stapled. The covers are lightly soiled and just a bit chipped along the bottom edge. Overall, a pretty copy.

This poem first appeared in *The New English Weekly Easter Number, 1940* (Gallup A36a – quantity unknown) and the second issue was a reprint of that supplement (Gallup A36b; 500 copies printed). This wraps copy, the first Faber edition and technically the third edition according to Gallup, had a press run of 9,030 copies.

East Coker was the ancestral home of the Eliot family and the middle section of part I in this poem directly quotes some Tudor English phrases written by one of his ancestors. Eliot visited East Coker in 1936/7 and his ashes are buried there.

All four “Quartets” have five parts or ‘movements’ – each one presenting a reflection or inflection on what went before while simultaneously preparing the ground for that which follows. This is from part III of “East Coker”:

…I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love  
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith  
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.  
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:  
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.  
Whisper of running streams, and winter lightening.  
The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,  
The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy  
Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony  
Of death and birth…

Original tan paper over white card covers, stapled. Back cover a bit soiled but otherwise a lovely copy of this most difficult to obtain of the “Four Quartets.”


Faber published this on September 4, 1941 with a press run of 11,223 copies. According to Gallup, “Late copies of the first impression are printed on slightly thicker paper without the watermark ADELPHI” – which *does* appear here.

While being one of the most English-sounding of poets, Eliot was actually born in St. Louis and his family summered at Cape Ann in Massachusetts when he was young. The Dry Salvages is a small group of rocks with a beacon off the coast of Cape Ann and the poem dramatically contrasts the Mississippi River (“a strong brown god”) with the sea.

Eliot has often been criticized for the orthodoxy of the Christian messages found in these poems, but there is also a profoundly Hindu and Buddhist sensibility which is often seamlessly – and almost inexplicably – blended into those messages (as in the lines quoted from “East Coker” above). Here is a more extreme example from part III of “The Dry Salvages”:

…I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant –  
Among other things – or one way of putting the same thing:  
That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray  
Of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret,  
Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened.  
And the way up is the way down, and the way forward is the way back.  
You cannot face it steadily, but this thing is sure,  
That time is no healer: the patient is no longer there…

This invocation of Krishna of the *Bhagavad gita* (not to mention the reference to Heraclitus – that most Eastern of Western philosophers – with the mention of the way up and down), is surprisingly followed by a short (fifteen line) prayer to the Virgin Mary which ends:

…Also pray for those who were in ships, and  
Ended their voyage on the sand, in the sea’s lips  
Or in the dark throat which will not reject them  
Or wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell’s  
Perpetual angelus.

Eliot was, if nothing else, a daring and eclectic thinker and poet.

Little Gidding, Faber and Faber, London, [1942]. 1 blank leaf + half-title + TP + 7-16, Octavo. First Edition (Gallup A42).

Faber printed 16,755 copies of this poem and released them on December 1, 1942. Early copies were sewn (as here) while later copies were stapled.

Little Gidding is a village in Cambridgeshire that Eliot visited in 1936. It was home to a religious community founded in 1626 which Charles I visited in 1633 and then again in 1646 – while he was fleeing Parliamentary troops (who subsequently destroyed the community).

“Little Gidding” presents some of the most profound thoughts to be found in these poems and Eliot does so in his most lyrical fashion. The fifth and final part ends with these famous lines which recall those found in part I of “Burnt Norton”:

```
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
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Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half heard, in the stillness
Between the two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always--
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of things shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.
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Original stiff brown card covers sewn with two loops of thread. Spine edge sunned and discolored about 3/8" deep. Otherwise a lovely copy.

**A Stapled, Separate Issue Copy of “Little Gidding”**

Little Gidding, Faber and Faber, London, [1942]. 1 blank leaf + half-title + TP + 7-16, Octavo. First Edition (Gallup A42).

$100

As above except stapled rather than sewn.

Original stiff brown card covers, stapled (indicating later issue). Spine edge sunned and discolored about 3/8" deep. Otherwise a lovely copy.
The **Four Quartets** in Book Form


$ 250

The first collected edition of these four famous poems. There were 4,165 first impression copies made, but they were so poorly printed that all but 788 copies (saved for copyright and review purposes) were destroyed. These copies all stated “first American edition” on the verso of the title page.

A second impression of 3,377 copies followed – of which this is one – which did not carry that designation.

Original publisher’s black cloth with gilt lettering on the spine and the original second impression dust jacket (with six books listed on the rear panel rather than the nine that appeared on the first impression dust jacket) which has minor wear on the spine tips. Otherwise, this a lovely copy of the first book issue of these fabulous poems.

**Eliot’s Address to the Virgil Society**


$ 95

The first issue of this was privately printed in a press run of 500 for members of the Virgil Society who received them free of charge. The first trade issue (as here) was released in an edition of 4,500 copies.

Eliot’s address delivered before the Virgil Society (of which he was the first president) on October 16, 1944.

Publisher’s original blue cloth with gilt lettering to the spine and the original dust jacket with has some minor cracks and stains. Overall, a very pretty copy of this address by Eliot.
EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY
(1892-1950)

First Edition, First Issue of Her First Book


$200

Millay, an American poet and playwright, was the third woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry – which she received in 1923. Her fame began in 1912 when, at the age of 20, she entered her poem "Renascence" in a poetry contest in *The Lyric Year*. The poem was widely considered the best submission, and when it was ultimately awarded fourth place, it created a scandal which brought Millay substantial publicity. The first-place winner was among those who felt that "Renascence" was the best poem, and stated that "the award was as much an embarrassment to me as a triumph." A second-prize winner offered Millay his $250 prize money. In the immediate aftermath of the *Lyric Year* controversy, wealthy arts patron Caroline B. Dow heard Millay reciting her poetry and playing the piano at the Whitehall Inn in Camden, Maine and was so impressed that she offered to pay for Millay's education at Vassar College where she flourished. She then moved to Greenwich Village where, holed up in a small, unheated apartment, she began to write shorter, pithier poems.

First issue copy printed on watermarked “Glaslan” paper and with two blank leave preceding the half title. Original publisher’s black cloth with gilt lettering to the front cover and the spine. The spine is cracked and loosely hinged in several places.

A Later Edition of Renascence


$35

Original black boards with gilt lettering on front cover and spine (very slightly sunned). Former owner’s signature to the front free endpaper (Eidth A. Campbell). A pretty copy.

Millay was the librettist for this classic American opera first performed at the Metropolitan Opera, NYC in 1927. The story is based on an Anglo-Saxon King Eadgar (called “the Peaceful”), Aethelwold, Earl of East Anglia, the King’s henchman and Aelfrida, the daughter of the Thane of Devon. The story hinges on the trickery of Aelfrida, the deception of the King, and the dramatic, surprise ending.

An immaculate copy in a badly chipped and split dust jacket amateurishly repaired with tape. Otherwise, a fine copy. **$ 80**


Original publisher’s blue boards with a paper label on black spine. A near fine copy. **$ 65**


Original publisher’s grey boards with paper label on black spine. Former owner’s very neat signature to inside cover. A lovely copy. **$ 45**


Original publisher’s light green boards with a paper label on dark green spine. A bit sunned on edges, but overall a lovely copy. **$ 45**

In a lightly chipped and soiled on the spine dust jacket. Otherwise, a bright, tight and clean copy.

$ 125


In original boards with paper label on spine. Top edges of cover a little bit sunned. Very good.

$ 50


Original blue-green paper wraps. Fine.

$ 100


Fine in near fine dust jacket.

$ 50


In the original dust jacket which is chipped and lightly stained. Former owner’s signature to front free end paper. A nice copy.

$ 50
SYLVIA PLATH
(1932-1963)

Her First Appearance in Book Form


Plath’s first appearance in book form, this anthology of writings from Oxford and Cambridge contains the first book printing of “Hardcastle Craggs” (which appears on pp. 166-67) and “Epitaph for Fire and Flower” (on pp. 222-23).

Already a genius at 28.

Flintlike, her feet struck
Such a racket of echoes from the steely street,
Tacking in moon-blued crooks from the black
Stone-built town, that she heard the quick air ignite
Its tinder and shake

A firework of echoes from wall
To wall of the dark, dwarfed cottages.
But the echoes died at her back as the walls
Gave way to fields and the incessant seethe of grasses
Riding in the full

Of the moon, manes to the wind,
Tireless, tied, as a moon-bound sea
Moves on its root…

An immaculate copy in a fine original dust jacket.
The First Appearance of “Tulips” – one of her most brilliant poems


$75

A souvenir program for the "Poetry at the Mermaid" Festival sponsored by the Poetry Book Society in association with the Arts Council of Great Britain held July 16 to July 23, 1961. Plath read “Tulips” – which along with eleven others had been commissioned by the Guinness Brewing Company – on Monday evening. It appears here on pages 53-54.

Plath at her very best. Writing about a time she was in hospital, “Tulips” is one of her most arresting, gripping and beautiful poems. It made its first book appearance four year later in Ariel.

…I am watched. Plath at her very best. Writing about a time she was in hospital, “Tulips” is one of her most arresting, gripping and beautiful poems. It made its first book appearance four year later in Ariel.

…The tulips are too red in the first place, they hurt me
Even through the gift paper I could hear them breathe
Lightly, through their white swaddling, like an awful baby.
Their redness talks to my wound, it corresponds.
They are subtle: they seem to float, though they weigh me down,
Upsetting me with their sudden tongues and their color,
A dozen red lead sinkers round my neck.

Nobody watched me before, now I am watched.
The tulips turn to me, and the window behind me
Where once a day the light slowly widens and slowly thins,
And I see myself, flat, ridiculous, a cut-paper shadow
Between the eye of the sun and the eyes of the tulips,
And I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself.
The vivid tulips eat my oxygen…

Original dark brown wraps with white knock-out letters and mermaid logo. The commissioned poems are printed on pages 25-71 on very poor, green paper. The rest of the book is on a quality white stock. There is one small nick to the middle of the spine edge. Otherwise a near perfect copy.


$100

Six of Plath’s poems lead off this issue of The London Magazine. “You’re” had been published two months earlier in the June issue of Harpers and it was subsequently printed in Ariel. The other five poems make their first appearance here – “Zoo Keeper’s Wife” [opening lines below], “Small Hours,” “Parliament Hill Fields,” “Whitsun” and “Leaving Early.” They all appeared later in Crossing the Waters.

I can stay awake all night, if need be –
Cold as an eel, without eyelids.
Like a dead lake the dark envelopes me,
Blueblack, a spectacular plum fruit.
No air bubbles start from my heart. I am lungless
And ugly, my belly a silk stocking
Where the heads and tails of my sisters decompose.
Look, they are melting like coins in the powerful juices ---
The spidery jaws, the spine bones bared for a moment
Like the white lines on a blueprint.
Should I stir, I think this pink and purple plastic
Guts bag would clack like a child's rattle,
Old grievances jostling each other, so many loose teeth.
But what do you know about that
My fat pork, my marrowy sweetheart, face-to-the-wall?
Some things of this world are indigestible.

Original “compliments” card and subscription request laid in. Fine with perhaps just a bit of sunning to the spine.
Edited by Sylvia Plath (but not containing any of her poems).

In the Introduction, Plath claims the publication is "a selection of poems by new and/or youngish American poets for the most part unknown in Britain. I'll let the vigour and variety of these poems speak for themselves."

Presents twenty-six poems by such writers as Adrienne Rich, Anne Sexton, W. D. Snodgrass and William Stafford.

Original wraps. An immaculate copy.

The First Appearance of Ten Important Late Poems by Plath including some of her most famous – published Eight Months after her suicide


The first appearance in print of ten late poems by Plath: “Death & Co.,” “Getting There,” “Lady Lazarus,” “Little Fugue” and “Daddy” (which appeared later in Ariel) along with “The Swarm,” “The Other,” “Childless Woman” and “Thalidomide” (which appeared later in Winter Trees).

Ted Hughes did not include the tenth poem that appears here, “The Jailer” (a scorching indictment of him), in any of the three books that he subsequently edited and published following her suicide. That poem’s opening ten lines (of forty-five) are:

My night sweats grease his breakfast plate.
The same placard of blue fog is wheeled into position
With the same trees and headstones.
Is that all he can come up with,
The rattler of keys?

I have been drugged and raped.
Seven hours knocked out of my right mind
Into a black sack
Where I relax, foetus or cat,
Lever of his wet dreams…

Some page corners are lightly bent, but otherwise a pretty copy.
Sylvia Plath committed suicide on February 11, 1963. Two years after her death, her estranged husband, Ted Hughes, selected forty of her works and published them in this, her second book – in which he included a dedication to her two surviving children Freida and Nicholas.

The six months prior to Plath’s suicide was a time of her most feverish creativity, producing some of the most famous poems written in the past seventy-five years.

…The moon is no door. It is a face in its own right, White as a knuckle and terribly upset.  
It drags the sea after it like a dark crime; it is quiet  
With the O-gape of complete despair. I live here.  
Twice on Sunday, the bells startle the sky –  
Eight great tongues affirming the Resurrection  
At the end, they soberly bong out their names.  

The yew tree points up, it has a Gothic shape.  
The eyes lift after it and find the moon.  
The moon is my mother. She is not sweet like Mary.  
Her blue garments unloose small bats and owls.  
How I would like to believe in tenderness –  
The face of the effigy, gentled by candles,  
Bending, on me in particular, its mild eyes…  

(“The Moon and the Yew Tree”)

…If I’ve killed one man, I’ve killed two –  
The vampire who said he was you  
And drank my blood for a year,  
Seven years, if you want to know.  
Daddy, you can lie back now.  

There’s a stake in your fat black heart  
And the villagers never liked you.  
They are dancing and stamping on you.  
They always knew it was you.  
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.  

(“Daddy”)

Beware  
Beware.  

Out of the ash  
I rise with my red hair  
And I eat men like air.  

(“Lady Lazarus”)

This first edition lacks three poems (“Lesbos,” “Mary's Song” and “The Swarm”) included in the later American edition.

Original red cloth with gilt lettering on spine in the original dust jacket with a slightly sunned spine and one 3/8" square chip from top front center and very minor chip and tear 2" to the right of that. With three contemporary reviews laid in. A lovely copy in a good dust jacket.
Six years after Ariel, Ted Hughes compiled and published another posthumous collection of his late wife’s works consisting of thirty-four poems. In a brief introductory statement, he notes that “With few exceptions, the poems in this volume were written in 1960 and 1961; that is, after the publication of The Colossus [Plath’s first book] and before the composition of the poems in Ariel.”

The final poem, “Among the Narcissi,” is one of her most poignant – written about an 80-year-old neighbor who was recovering from lung surgery.

Spry, wry, and gray as these March sticks,  
Percy bows, in his blue peajacket, among the narcissi.  
He is recuperating from something on the lung.

The narcissi, too, are bowing to some big thing:  
It rattles their stars on the green hill where Percy  
Nurses the hardship of his stitches, and walks and walks.

There is a dignity to this; there is a formality-  
The flowers vivid as bandages, and the man mending.  
They bow and stand: they suffer such attacks!

And the octogenarian loves the little flocks.  
He is quite blue; the terrible wind tries his breathing.  
The narcissi look up like children, quickly and whitely.

Original publisher’s dust jacket with one small closed tear (3/4" long, top edge, 1" right of spine). Original blue cloth with gilt lettering to the spine. Overall, a tight, bright copy.

An UNCORRECTED PROOF COPY of Hughes final compilation of Plath’s works – with the poems arranged in a slightly different order than the final published version and with different pagination.

This remarkable book contains several excellent poems, most especially, the first edition printing of another Plath tour-de-force, “The Rabbit Catcher”:

It was a place of force—
The wind gagging my mouth with my own blown hair,
Tearing off my voice, and the sea
Blinding me with its lights, the lives of the dead
Unreeling in it, spreading like oil.

I tasted the malignity of the gorse,
Its black spikes,
The extreme unction of its yellow candle-flowers.
They had an efficiency, a great beauty,
And were extravagant, like torture.

There was only one place to get to.
Simmering, perfumed,
The paths narrowed into the hollow.
And the snares almost effaced themselves—
Zeros, shutting on nothing,

Set close, like birth pangs.
The absence of shrieks
Made a hole in the hot day, a vacancy.
The glassy light was a clear wall,
The thickets quiet.

I felt a still busyness, an intent.
I felt hands round a tea mug, dull, blunt,
Ringing the white china.
How they awaited him, those little deaths!
They waited like sweethearts. They excited him.

And we, too, had a relationship—
Tight wires between us,
Pegs too deep to uproot, and a mind like a ring
Sliding shut on some quick thing,
The constriction killing me also.

Original blue wraps with title, author and publisher and marked: "UNCORRECTED / PROOF COPY / Not for Sale / Nor for review or serialization / without the publisher's permission / Publication date not yet settled". A fine copy.

First Edition Printing of Winter Trees


As above, but with the poems in a slightly different order.

According to Hughes’ prefatory note “The poems in this volume are all out of the batch from which the Ariel poems were more or less arbitrarily chosen and they were all composed in the last nine months of Sylvia Plath’s life.”

Original blue covers with lettering on spine. Wrapped in original fine dust jacket. A fine copy.

Plath's only novel, originally released in England in 1963 under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas. This is the first US edition which contains a biographical note by Lois Ames and eight previously unpublished drawings by the author.

*The Bell Jar* is the only novel written by the American writer and poet Sylvia Plath. Originally published under the pseudonym "Victoria Lucas" in 1963, the novel is semi-autobiographical, with the names of places and people changed. The book is often regarded as a *roma a clef* because the protagonist's descent into mental illness parallels Plath's own experiences with what may have been clinical depression or bipolar disorder.

Plath died by suicide a month after its first UK publication. The novel was published under Plath's name for the first time in 1967 and was not published in the United States until 1971, in accordance with the wishes of both Plath's estranged husband, Ted Hughes, and her mother.

In a good dust jacket (1" tear - amateurishly repaired with tape on inside - on top edge to the right of the spine; spine dented – ½" diameter - 2" down from top, intrudes on the word "Sylvia"). The book is similarly dented. Otherwise, a tight and clean copy.

Original green paper wraps, sunned on spine and edges with a 1” split to the lower front edge of the spine. Otherwise a lovely copy.

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**The Magic Mirror, A Study of the Double in Two of Dostoevsky’s Novels.** Embers Handpress, Rhiwargor, Llanwddyn, Powys, 1989. 3 blank leaves + half-title + TP + 1-60 + [61] = publisher’s limitation page + 2 blank leaves, Octavo. *First Edition*. [not listed in Lane/Stevens which was published in 1978]

Number 8 of 50 specially bound copies.

Sylvia Plath’s thesis which was submitted “in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Special Honors in English when she was a student at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1955.”

There were just 226 copies printed of this book. Twenty-six (A-Z) were press reserves and 1-50 were bound in a special Oxford Hollow binding. This is number 8, one of the special bindings with the original slipcase. Fine.
Here they are on the balcony,
Garish, burned harsh into color.
In the city of Pisanello and Stefano,
Who lightly touched the Madonna's hair into wings,
I can buy this romantical junk for fifty lire
And send vulgarity home. Romeo, Giulietta,
How do you survive? Not even Shakespeare
Could kill you once and for all, vanishing
So much clear genius on his fierce cold play:
First, his thugs on the streets, held back
From cutting each other's throats only
By threats of a flat thwack on the skull;
Then families hating each other,
The trysts after dark,
One pointless murder after another,
The questionable marriage the world
Would have hushed up and broken anyway.
And the absolutely final death, ridiculous,
Brutal, a cheap loss, a death cruel
And stupid as yours or mine.

Yet not even Shakespeare could kill them
Once and for all. If you don't believe me,
Just mention the names to anyone,
A stranger on the street: Romeo, Juliet.
And all that the stranger will remember
Is a radiance in the dusk,
A light wing fluttering in a vine,
Hands shocked by touching,
Strange and forbidden,
A bomb, and no chance to live long.

Oh, I know:
It's nothing after all
But a prosaic clutter:
Shakespeare, in a hurry,
Stole the plot of Romeo and Juliet
From a mediocre narrative poem
Written in fourteeners by Arthur Brooke.
And I know:
He probably lifted at least part of the plot
Of As You Like It

From an English translation of an Italian novella
By Robert Greene,
Who bad-mouthed the young Shakespeare
For stealing scenes from his betters,
As Greene, defeated and debt-ridden,
Lay whining penances
On his own dirty deathbed.
I know:
The citizens of Verona once called
Their ruler a crazy dog.
I know:
The heavens blossoming above this ravishing
And beautiful city blackened with wings
Of bombing planes,
And children scampering like mice
Into the cracks of the vast marble Arena,
All hell broken loose.
Oh, I know
All I'm giving you is a cheap, chintzy
Picture postcard, a gross and messy imitation
Of a poet's dream of something hopeless
That didn't have a chance in this world.
What chance do we have?
We are nothing but a poet's dream
Of lovers who choose to live.
Not a chance.

Oh, I know:
I know, I know, I know,
How can I forget?
This world is a mess,
A sinking menace of loveliness and danger.
Fumbling to touch hands in the dark,
Their hands fluttered into flames.
I know, and yet--
Just mention their names
To any stranger,
Anyone at all.
He will recall,
Not the strange menace of their loveliness,
But only the lovers.
Original publisher’s floral printed dust jacket with a few “worm holes” and dings to the lower edges. Otherwise a tight, bright and clean copy of this collection by a Pulitzer Prize winning American poet.
Erato, the Muse of Poetry